

Ashlea House School

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	357/6003
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135975
Inspection number	353914
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A¹ of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Ashlea House is a school for boys aged from 11 to 18 years with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school is owned by Full Circle Care Limited. It opened in August 2009 and is located on the same site as the residential home where the students live. There are three students on roll and none has a statement of special educational needs. The students come from three local authorities covering different geographical parts of the United Kingdom. All the students have been placed at the school because of the extreme personal difficulties they have experienced in their home areas. The school's aims are, 'to provide a high quality education within a caring environment, adapted for students with specific needs' and 'to equip students with the skills, knowledge, experiences and attitudes to participate in, and contribute to becoming valued members of society.' This was the school's first inspection of its educational provision.

Evaluation of the school

Ashlea House School is providing a good quality of education for its students. The students make good progress in their academic learning, and in their all-round personal development. The quality of adult support is helping the students to develop their personal, social and moral qualities, alongside extending the range of opportunities for the students to gain different types of external accreditation. Secure and robust safeguarding procedures are in place. The school meets its aims and most of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. There is a suitable range of curricular and extra-curricular activities, which are helping to promote the students' academic learning and the personal, social and moral aspects of their characters. The range of subjects taught reflects well on the needs of the students, although there are limitations in the opportunities for practical work in science and currently no provision for design and technology. There are good opportunities for the students to use computers to aid their research and presentation of work. Plans are at an

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

advanced stage to extend the range of learning opportunities for the students by working in collaboration with other providers in the local area. The school makes very good use of external specialists in music and sport to enhance the learning opportunities in these two areas where the staff have limited expertise and experience. Additional extra-curricular opportunities in the students' residential home are also providing valuable additional learning experiences, especially in the area of food technology. The school's curriculum policy outlines a clear rationale for the range of National Curriculum subjects and other activities that are taught across the school, with detailed schemes of work based on national guidance in place. The balance and time allocations given to different areas and subjects are appropriate. There is good coverage of basic literacy and numeracy skills, which is helping the students to improve their reading, writing, spelling and number competencies. The opportunities for the students to gain external accreditation in GCSE and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network are good and expanding further with their developing learning needs. The school is working hard to develop links with Connexions personal advisers and to provide out-of-school work experiences. However, the nature of the students' identified supervision needs do place limitations of the extent of this provision.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment are good. The working relationships between school staff and students are very good in all lessons because of the effective management and organisation of learning. Teachers make very clear to the students what they are going to teach and what they are expected to learn; this gives the students a sense of the expectations made in all aspects of their work in school. Teachers generally use lesson time well, although occasionally some activities go on too long for some students, which results in marginally less productive work. The use of additional adult support in lessons works extremely well, and ensures that all students work with at least one adult to two students in all learning activities. Teachers' planning is satisfactory overall. There is a consistency to the planning format used by teachers but the range and quality varies in its usefulness to aid effective teaching. This is because there is an imbalance in terms of the detail of what will be taught and what the students will be expected to learn. Assessment procedures are secure and carried out on a regular basis. Teachers' marking is consistently carried out and is well balanced in terms of praise and comments about where improvements can be made.

The standards achieved range from average to below average in the subjects taught. However, the students generally start at the school with lower than the expected levels of knowledge and skills because of their personal problems which have impacted adversely on their previous learning and academic progress. However, given their starting points at the school, the students make good overall progress in their all-round development; this applies in particular, to their attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The overall quality and effectiveness of the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its students is satisfactory. The school actively promotes the students' moral and social development, particularly in the way that the staff work in lessons and in linking with the students' residential home. This work is helping the students to develop their understanding of the differences between right and wrong, and the consequences that any anti-social behaviour has on them. Lessons provide many opportunities to help the students develop their social skills, particularly in whole-class discussions and separately when working in one-to-one activities with teachers. Staff operate a well understood approach to behaviour management in lessons and, for their part, the students are quick to raise concerns or problems with the staff when the need arises. Behaviour is always good. Students' cultural development is satisfactory. The curriculum and out-of-lesson activities provide some opportunities for the students to understand about a limited range of different faiths and aspects of different cultures, but this does not yet include planned provision for all students to develop further their understanding of all public services and local, national and world faiths. The school works closely with the students' residential home to support aspects of their moral and social development, in line with their identified needs. This productive partnership is giving the students many varied opportunities to make a positive contribution to their home and school life. Plans are advanced to provide further learning opportunities in the local area, but the final details and confirmation of this work still has a few barriers to overcome. Although there is some variation in the students' enjoyment of school, their attitudes in lessons and in talking with staff and inspectors are exemplary. The students' attendance at school is excellent.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school's overall measures to promote the welfare, health and safety of its students, including child protection, are good. Procedures for safeguarding the students are very well established and well adhered to by all adults who work in the school. Supervision in lessons and when the students are moving about the school is very effective. The expectations of appropriate behaviour are clear and applied consistently and fairly by staff. The staff act quickly and effectively to help those students who present occasional episodes of behaviour that need specialist support. The students know clearly what is expected of them, in respect of their attitudes in lessons, to other students and staff. The development of the students' physical, emotional and social well-being is good, which is helping them to adapt to the demands of the school. The school policies on anti-bullying, discipline and first aid are compliant with the regulations. The health and safety policy is also compliant but is out of date. The school actively promotes healthy living, particularly through its approach to healthy eating and regular physical activity. The school currently does not comply fully with all aspects of the regulation relating with its admissions register. Fire safety checks comply fully with the regulations. The school meets fully

the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets all the regulations for ensuring that all staff are suitably qualified and appropriately checked for them to work with the students and maintains a single central register as required.

School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises and accommodation are of a very good standard. The open-planned and spacious classroom is of a suitable size for the age and number of students on roll. Resources are generally good, but there are limitations in some practical areas such as those for science and design and technology. The students have suitable access to washrooms and toilets.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school is failing to meet a number of regulations relating to the provision of information for parents, carers and others. Currently, it does not provide the contact details of the proprietor or the chair of its board of governors. Furthermore, it does not make it known that a range of information is available on request. This includes information on admissions, discipline and exclusions, the educational and welfare provision for students with special educational needs, the policies on bullying, health and safety, behaviour and sanctions, safeguarding, the complaints procedures, and a list of all staff with their qualifications. Also, the school has not advanced any plans for providing the placing local authorities, or the secretary of state on request, with a copy of income received and expenditure incurred. Other information in the school brochure is clear and concise. Annual reports are of a satisfactory standard.

Procedures for handling complaints

The procedures for handling complaints comply fully with the regulations.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

³ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- maintain an accurate and up-to-date admissions register for all students at the school (paragraph 3(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of the contact address and telephone number for the proprietor, during both term time and holidays, where he may be contacted at all times (paragraph 6(2)(b))
- provide particulars for correspondence of the Chair of the Board of Governors (paragraph 6(2)(c))
- ensure that parents, carers and others are aware they can request to see, either on the school website if it exists, or in writing the following information:
 - admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(3)(a))
 - particulars of educational and welfare provision for students with statements of special educational needs and for students for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(3)(b))
 - particulars of policies relating to bullying, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of students misbehaving (paragraph 6(3)(d))
 - details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(3)(f))
 - the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(3)(g))
 - a copy of the safeguarding children policy (paragraph 6(4))
- ensure that an annual account of income and expenditure incurred by the school is provided to all the local authorities, which have placed students at the school (paragraph 6(8)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Develop a planned provision that provides opportunities for all students to develop their knowledge and understanding of public services, and the different local, national and world faiths.

- Develop teachers' planning to ensure a better balance between the details of what will be taught and what students will be expected to learn.

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of students		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of students' needs		√		
How well students make progress in their learning		√		

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development			√	
The behaviour of students		√		

Welfare, health and safety of students

The overall welfare, health and safety of students		√		
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School details

Name of school	Ashlea House School		
DCSF number	357/6003		
Unique reference number (URN)	135975		
Type of school	Special school for boys with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
Status	Independent day school		
Date school opened	August 2009		
Age range of students	11–18		
Gender of students	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
Number of students with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of students who are looked after	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
Annual fees (day students)	£26,000		
Email address	christine@fullcirclecare.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Kim Parish		
Proprietor	Full Circle Care Limited		
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI		
Dates of inspection	16–17 June 2010		