

The Old Priory School

Independent school progress report

DCSF registration number	886/6076
Unique Reference Number (URN)	131422
Inspection number	354024
Inspection dates	26 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Best

Published:

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Purpose and scope of the visit

This inspection visit was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002¹, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005². The visit was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

Information about the school

The Old Priory School is an independent day special school for up to 30 pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 years. There are currently 22 pupils on roll and all are looked after by local authorities. The Old Priory School is one of two schools owned by Ethelbert Children's Services and it opened in 1997 to facilitate the educational placements for pupils who are resident in their homes. The school operates from The Old Priory School building and two additional sites, each a 20-minute journey away. The pupils have been identified as having severe emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. Many of them have histories of disrupted education and exclusion from mainstream schools. The school aims 'to offer a holistic therapeutic approach to schooling and learning'.

Context of the visit

The school was previously inspected on 11 and 12 November 2008. Its action plan, outlining how it proposed to address the regulations that had not been met, was evaluated and approved in October 2009. This is the first visit to monitor the school's progress in implementing its action plan.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

The inspection of November 2008 identified weaknesses in subject policies and curriculum planning. Since the inspection, a whole-school curriculum policy has been agreed and all subject policies have been reviewed and revised. Satisfactory schemes of work for all subjects, upon which teachers' planning is based, are now in place and links between subjects, such as English and information and communication technology, are established. The weaknesses have been remedied and the requirement is met.

At that previous inspection, while the assessment of pupils' learning was satisfactory, teachers were not making sufficient use of this information, together with other information about what pupils knew and could do, in planning pupils' next steps in

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

learning. Good practice has been shared and developed since the inspection and staff are now making effective use in their planning of the information they gather from assessment and discussions with their pupils. As a result, pupils' needs are being more effectively met and their progress is more consistent. Residential staff regularly visit classes to see how pupils are progressing and identify ways in which they can support them at home. This further strengthens pupils' confidence and success in learning. The school acknowledges that its next step is to draw up a written assessment policy that formalises current practice. The school now meets the requirement to make effective use of assessment information to plan pupils' learning.

At the time of the 2008 inspection, the school did not provide an appropriately detailed personal, social and health education programme and pupils lacked knowledge of public institutions and services in England. All pupils now follow an appropriate programme which covers the full breadth of topics required to support their personal development, leading to external accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4. This programme also provides citizenship education which, together with topics in history and geography, informs pupils effectively about public institutions and services in England.

The previous inspection found that policies to support behaviour management were insufficiently detailed to inform staff and pupils about agreed strategies, and these were not well linked to those in the homes. As a result, the behaviour of pupils was not always well managed and expectations between the school and the homes were not clear. The school has subsequently established, with the homes, a whole-school behaviour policy which sets out an agreed approach to strategies, rewards, sanctions and counselling. The implementation of the policy is monitored and evaluated annually by staff and pupil representatives from the school council. This requirement is now met.

The school's admission register, which was incomplete at the time of the previous inspection, now meet requirements. The school's single central record, summarising the checks made on the suitability of adults to work with pupils, fulfils current requirements. The previous inspection identified a number of omissions in the information provided for parents. The school's prospectus has since been updated and all the required information is either available in this document or suitably signposted in accordance with the regulations.

The previous inspection found that there were no facilities for pupils who are ill at any of the school's sites. The facilities now provide at the main site meet requirements, but the school has yet to make the necessary provision at its two other sites.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection visit, the school must take action to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003³ as amended ('the Regulations'), as follows:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999, at the school's outlying sites.

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

School details

Name of school	The Old Priory School		
DCSF number	886/6076		
Unique reference number (URN)	131422		
Type of school	Special day school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1997		
Age range of pupils	11–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 19	Girls: 3	Total: 22
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 18	Girls: 1	Total: 19
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 19	Girls: 3	Total: 22
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,823–£33,072		
Address of school	Priory Road Ramsgate Kent CT11 0PG		
Telephone number	01843 599322		
Fax number	01843 599333		
Email address	jack.banner@ethelbert.net		
Headteacher	Jack Banner		
Proprietor	Ethelbert Children's Services		
Reporting inspector	Michael Best		
Dates of inspection	26 March 2010		