

# The Small School

Independent school progress report

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Unique Reference Number (URN)	113611
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Reporting inspector	Tom Smith

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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 2002<sup>1</sup>, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005<sup>2</sup>.

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 Small School, located in former chapel premises in Hartland, North Devon, is a co-educational, non-selective, independent school for students aged 11 to 16 years of age. There are currently 19 students on roll. The school also accepts students who have a statement of special educational needs; there is one such student currently on the school roll. The school was established in 1982 by a cooperative of parents who wished to provide a school offering a 'human scale education'.

The aim of the school is 'to produce qualified, creative and self-confident young people with an enduring appetite for learning and a respect for others and their environment'.

## Context of the visit

The school was first inspected in September 2008. At that time, the school failed to meet a number of regulations. Following the inspection, the school formulated an action plan in November 2008; this was evaluated and rejected in March 2009 as being unsatisfactory and the school was required to re-submit a revised plan. The revision was submitted in May 2009. This latter response was then followed by several letters to the Department, which further indicated what the school intended to do. The purpose of this monitoring visit to the school was to evaluate the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

When the school was inspected in September 2008, it failed to meet a number of regulations relating to the assessment of students' progress, students' welfare, health and safety, the suitability of the proprietor and staff, the accommodation and the information which the school provided to parents and others.

At the time of the inspection in 2008, the quality of teaching was satisfactory but the assessment of students' work was identified as being insufficiently rigorous and the

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

school did not have an established framework that it used consistently to record student performance. In its action plan, the school indicated that it would review its assessment procedures and ensure that all staff would have access to the relevant information concerning students' progress and attainment. The school has now instituted more formal procedures for the assessment of students' work. These include embedding the practice of assessment within lessons and making a record of the outcomes of these assessments. The subjects of English, mathematics and science have formalised assessment policies and the school intends to extend this requirement to all other subjects. The school also uses commercially available tests to establish students' starting points, from which further teaching is provided. Individual teachers also devise their own additional mechanisms for establishing progress in learning; these include end of module quizzes, targeted homework activities and feedback through the marking of students' work. Students are engaged in this process through self-assessment, where they are required to identify and record what they have learned and what they remain unsure about. Students continue to undertake a range of GCSE examinations. The regulations relating to teaching and assessment are now met.

The provision for the safeguarding and supervision of students and provision for first aid were judged to be inadequate at the time of the inspection. The designated person for matters of safeguarding was not always available and many staff had an inadequate knowledge and awareness of safeguarding issues. Since 2008, the school has ensured that staff have received the appropriate training to increase their knowledge and awareness about safeguarding. However, since the departure of the previous headteacher, there is no longer a designated person available who has undergone the appropriate training. The nominated person has been unable, so far, to undertake the training, but is now booked on a course that is due to take place in October 2010. Meanwhile, the school fails to meet this significant requirement. With regard to other matters of students' welfare, the school has improved its procedures and information about first aid and has also formalised its supervision of students, so that the relevant requirements are met.

The inspection of 2008 found that not all of the required checks were undertaken prior to staff being confirmed in their appointment to the school. Specifically, health checks were not undertaken. A scrutiny of the single central register indicates that some of these checks are still not made. In addition, there are no records relating to staff eligibility to work in the United Kingdom or indications that their professional qualifications have been checked and that their curriculum vitae have been validated. The school still fails to meet these significant requirements.

The inspection found that some areas of flooring were in need of renovation. Although there were sufficient toilets for staff and students, these did not have a hot water supply. The school did not have appropriate facilities for students who might be ill. Areas of the grounds required tidying of the noticeable quantities of accumulated rubbish. The school has responded positively to these issues and has completed the remedial work that was required. All washrooms now have a hot water supply, flooring has been attended to and the grounds and gardens are clear

of rubbish. The school has been unable to establish a facility for students who may become ill. A location has been identified for this but it has not yet been equipped appropriately. The school still does not meet this requirement.

The inspection of 2008 established that parents were not given information about admission, discipline and exclusion procedures or about students who might be admitted with a statement of special educational needs. Additionally the school had not fulfilled its duties with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. The school has improved the procedures and provides parents with all the information to which they are entitled. The school has failed to compile an appropriate three-year accessibility plan that meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

## 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 2003<sup>3</sup> as amended ('the Regulations'), as follows:

- ensure that there is a designated member of staff who has been appropriately trained in matters of safeguarding students (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff (including volunteers), ensure that appropriate checks have been carried out and completed to confirm:
  - medical fitness
  - previous employment history
  - character references
  - where appropriate, qualifications and professional references
  - and, for appointments from 1 May 2007:
    - ensure that each member of staff has the right to work in the United Kingdom (paragraph 4(2)(a))
- for each member of staff in post on or after 1 September 2003, ensure that the central register shows that the following checks were made:
  - of his/her identity (and the date on which this check was made)
  - of their qualifications (where required) (and the date of the check)
  - whether an enhanced CRB certificate was obtained
  - if so, the date on which the check was completed or certificate obtained
  - whether she/he is subject to any direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (reference to List 99) or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which would have the same effect (and the date undertaken).

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<sup>3</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm)

For each member of staff in post on or after 1 May 2007, the register should show the following additional check was made:

- his/her right to work in the United Kingdom and, where relevant, for those who have lived outside the United Kingdom, additional checks as appropriate to ensure suitability to work in a school (and the date these checks were done). (paragraph 4C (2) and (3))
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

The school should also write a three-year accessibility plan that meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

## School details

Name of school	The Small School		
DCSF number	878/6036		
Unique reference number (URN)	113611		
Type of school	Secondary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1982		
Age range of pupils	11-16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 11	Girls: 8	Total: 19
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	Minimum contribution of £900		
Address of school	Fore Street Hartland Bideford Devon EX39 6AB		
Telephone number	01237 441672		
Email address	smallschoolhartland@yahoo.co.uk		
Headteacher	Ms Maya Buckley		
Proprietor	Trustees of The Small School		
Reporting inspector	Tom Smith		
Dates of inspection	5 July 2010		