

Meadows - Green Corns

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Ramesh Kapadia

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Meadows – Green Corns School was registered as an independent school in 2004. It makes provision for one or two students aged between 10 and 18 years who are in the care of a placing local authority and have usually missed substantial periods of education. Meadows is also registered as a children's home and provides 52-week care as well as education. The length of time a student stays at the school varies considerably, from a few weeks to over one year. The school's aim is to provide 'excellence, equality and high achievement for all, by unconditional positive regard for everyone.' There is currently one part-time Year 12 student on the school's roll. No student has a statement of special educational needs. The school's previous education inspection was in 2007 and the last social care inspection was in October 2010.

Evaluation of the school

Meadows – Green Corns School provides a satisfactory quality of education, with a number of good features, including the provision for students' welfare, health and safety. It meets its aims overall. There are shared ways of working amongst the staff, as is evident in the way that care and education staff work together, for example in encouraging students to attend school. At the previous inspection, a number of regulations were not met but improvements that have taken place mean that all regulations are now met. The curriculum has improved and is now good; students' progress is satisfactory, as is the quality of teaching and assessment. Safeguarding arrangements are fully in place and regularly reviewed.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and has an appropriate range with reasonable breadth and balance and is very flexibly adapted to meet students' individual needs. It is based on the National Curriculum and stresses the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, as well as information and communication technology for all students. Draft timetables show a full entitlement in Key Stage 3, with options available at Key Stage 4. The teaching is adapted to meet students' different needs to help them to catch up on lost ground and build up their confidence. Other elements provided are

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

physical education, citizenship and a course on 'preparation for life', to support the students' future economic well-being. Personal, social and health education is taught and supported by work undertaken by care staff as part of the 24-hour curriculum. A choice of modern languages is offered, as well options in history or geography, art and music. Extensive use is made of entry level courses to enable students to gain externally recognised accredited qualifications, as a means to build up their self-esteem. A distinctive feature of the provision is the availability of vocational courses: a taster course in a local college is being undertaken currently.

Careers education is supported by good links to the Connexions service; students are also helped to plan for independent living. Appropriate courses are suggested for Year 11 students to enable them to continue with education or training after reaching school-leaving age. The curriculum is complemented by a range of external trips, for example, to a local theatre, although none have been undertaken this year. The range of extra-curricular activities is limited, partly because some students choose not to participate.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Testing of students' prior attainment is usually undertaken on entry and information is used to plan suitable lessons. Teachers maintain records of lessons outcomes and progress. There have been improvements since the last inspection. Planning has improved and there are more resources available. Teaching is undertaken by a team of staff, who are offered regular opportunities for further training. Teaching is usually on a one-to-one basis which limits the opportunities for students to learn collaboratively. There are limited opportunities for practical work in lessons.

The school's own self-evaluation of teaching includes a useful measure devised internally by staff to measure the percentage of time a student engages in a lesson: occasionally there is a substantial change overall, prompting further investigation and discussion with the care staff to find the underlying reasons, and possibly leading to an alteration in the timetable. Sometimes, the extent of students' participation is quite low, partly because of a lack of interest or external pressures.

Progress overall is satisfactory. Some students make good progress in their learning. For example, in 2009, one student obtained five passes at GCSE and a number of entry level certificates; although only one pass was at the higher grade, this nevertheless was a considerable achievement after missing much education in previous years. Other students have gained a few entry level certificates before leaving.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Effective links between the care and education staff ensure that students' moral development is good and is fostered via the 24-hour curriculum. There are some strengths in social and cultural education but students' responses to what is provided for them are not always positive. Self-sufficiency is promoted

through actions to develop independent life skills; for example, students learn to manage pocket money and an allowance for clothes which also helps to develop their economic awareness.

Opportunities for the promotion of spiritual development are not well developed across the curriculum. Visits are occasionally arranged to local places of worship, although sometimes students do not participate. Religious education is not regularly taught in Key Stage 4. Visits encourage students' cultural development and there is appropriate provision for equality and diversity within the 24-hour curriculum. Students develop an understanding of public institutions and services through a carefully devised course on citizenship.

Records show that attendance usually improves over time whilst students are in the school, but is still low. Students' behaviour is satisfactory and improves over time which represents considerable progress for those whose education has been disrupted in the past. There have been no exclusions from the school.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety of students is good. Child protection procedures are in place and given a high priority, with regular training for all staff, and enhanced training for the designated child protection officer. The positive ethos in the home ensures that students feel safe and well-cared for, as confirmed in discussion and returns to the student questionnaires. Bullying is comparatively rare, and there is a suitable policy to prevent it. Health and safety requirements are met, with regular checks, as noted in a recent social care report. Fire drills are conducted regularly. An admissions register is kept in line with requirements, fulfilling a regulation which had been failed on the last inspection. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, with a policy in place to increase access.

Healthy living is promoted by involving students in planning their diet on a regular basis, but some admit to sometimes using pocket money to eat less healthy food. Students are also prompted to adopt a healthy lifestyle by care staff and warned of the dangers of drugs such as tobacco.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school undertakes all the required checks on staff and maintains a single central register.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school is located in a modern detached building in a quiet residential road. The premises and accommodation are adequate for the students on roll. There is a small classroom for teaching, with adequate resources including a computer and printer. Facilities for teaching practical subjects such as science and art are limited. There is

a rear garden which is used for horticultural purposes and recreation. A local leisure centre and a park are also used for recreation.

Provision of information

There are established channels of communication between the school, students, their families and local authorities. Monthly education progress reports are completed to support individual education plans which are completed for all students. Reports are also produced annually. The school's brochure includes all the required information, for parents, carers and others, including recent results of public examinations.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints policy complies fully with the regulations.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

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

- increase opportunities for students to learn collaboratively
- incorporate more practical activities into lessons.

Inspection judgements

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 pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development			✓	
The behaviour of pupils			✓	

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special school		
Date school opened	December 2004		
Age range of pupils	10-18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Number of boarders	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Annual fees (boarders)	£257,400		
Email address	angela.norris-heyesh@greencorns.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Norris-Heyes		
Proprietor	Continuum Group		