

Pegasus School

Independent school standard inspection report

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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

The school is a part of the SENAD group of schools and is also a registered children's home. It currently provides education for boys and girls aged 10 to 19 years, although it is registered for students from eight years of age. The school admits students who have complex speech, language and communication needs. Many also have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder and other associated behaviours. Nearly all students are boys and most are White British. Over half of the students are looked after. Eleven are taught in the post-16 department. The school opened in 2000 and the last inspection of education provision was in 2008. The boarding provision was last inspected in August 2011 when it was graded as good overall. There are currently 20 students on role; 16 currently reside in accommodation on the school site and four are day students. All students have a statement of special educational needs. The school admits students from 12 local authorities in England and Wales. The headteacher has been in post since January 2012.

The school's main aim is to meet all education and care entitlements and enable each student 'to be as independent as possible in learning and social situations.'

Evaluation of the school

The quality of education is good and all except one of the regulations for independent schools are met. The school is successful in meeting its aims of developing students' independence. As a result of the good teaching and assessment, students increasingly become re-engaged in their education, generally make good progress and develop personal and communication skills well. The school uses a range of highly skilled inter-disciplinary staff effectively, including therapists and those who work in boarding, so that all areas of students' development are targeted in a coordinated and cohesive way. Since the previous inspection, the school has tackled the areas for improvement effectively and past regulatory failures have been suitably remedied. Welfare, health and safety are outstanding, and arrangements for safeguarding are robust and rigorous.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It meets all requirements and links aspects of care, education and therapy well to support students' 24 hour learning. In Key Stages 2, 3

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

and 4 it is based on the National Curriculum with a strong emphasis on developing students' communication and personal skills. As a result, students make good progress overall, although some do make outstanding progress in their learning and personal development. Particularly strong progress is made in developing students' readiness to learn and participate in lessons. Staff know students extremely well and regular assessments allow them to react quickly and effectively to any changes in students' circumstances. Lesson planning is effectively tailored to meet students' specific needs and capabilities well. In Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, there is an emphasis on the development of cross-curricular skills through a rolling programme of topics. This helps students to develop knowledge, skills and understanding in an integrated, meaningful and coherent way. In Key Stage 5, the curriculum is based on the Award Scheme and Development accreditation network (ASDAN) Diploma course, which covers a range of areas, such as: functional skills, including literacy and numeracy; vocational skills, personal, social, health education; citizenship, life skills and art. It is currently being reviewed and new qualifications are being identified which could meet students' needs more effectively. Work experience is provided, within the school, for older students. Students are given jobs to do in the kitchen or around the grounds. Currently, however there are no opportunities provided for work experience to be undertaken in the wider community, but this is under review.

Staff use a wide range of methods to support the development of students' communication skills. These include the Makaton sign system, picture exchange communication system (PECS), spoken language and objects of reference. Due to the training, and other input from therapists, staff are skilful at using these methods appropriately to meet the specific communication needs of each student.

Plans for individuals cover several aspects of their development, including behaviour, academic progress and other areas of their development through various therapies. Provision and outcomes are closely monitored by staff, who continually assess the progress students' are making against all of their targets and record how much support has been provided in each case. This shows that, over time, students are expected to become less reliant on support to complete tasks. There is good collaborative working between the boarding and school provision, so that targets are contributed to, both during the school day and during students' time in the residence. Strong procedures are in place for the handover of students at the start and the end of the day. This ensures that anything of significance that has happened in the meantime has been recorded and passed on to the receiving staff to inform their work with the students. This allows a continuity of approach which benefits the students.

The quality of teaching and assessment is generally good across the school and some is outstanding. However, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching seen within the post-16 department which resulted in students not always making consistently good progress in the lessons observed. Throughout the school, the better teaching results in good progress due to impressive pace and activities which are suitably matched to the needs of all students. In some lessons observed, support staff showed that they are highly skilled in supporting students with complex

needs. This is achieved by providing a range of enjoyable activities, in short bursts of work, and being very skilful in knowing when to intervene and when to step back and allow time for reflection and independent working. In some lessons the pace was more pedestrian and the teaching and support was not always meeting the needs of all students in whole-class teaching situations. Nevertheless, in all lessons seen, whole-class teaching led on to effective individual working, where students were provided with a range of well-planned tasks to develop their learning so that lesson objectives were met. Teachers are careful to balance the need for continual reinforcement of previous learning with not being repetitive. The school's systems for monitoring academic progress are being developed using a scheme which monitors progress using four criteria: progress against national benchmarks; achievement of different groups of students, including by gender, age and ethnicity; progress against students' own individual targets; and professional judgment/contextual interpretation. This system provides a well-rounded assessment of students' academic progress and allows for the school's leaders to monitor the progress for any patterns or trends made by individuals or groups of students.

Students make good progress. Targets are set by class teachers, using the school's data over time as a starting point. Generally, students meet the targets set for them. School data shows that more progress is made in science and maths than it is in English. The school's assessments show that good progress is made by individual students in areas of personal and social development. Although individuals' personal development is monitored closely, using the 'every child matters' outcomes as a guide, there is no external benchmarking in place to make explicit judgments about overall progress in this area.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Student independence is a major focus of the school's work and there is strong evidence that during their time in the school, their independence and sociability are developed well and that students are encouraged to develop a good understanding of the consequences of their behaviour. They are also provided with opportunities and support to enable them to participate in their annual reviews and other meetings as appropriate.

Students greatly enjoy their learning, as teaching effectively meets their needs, providing a range of individual activities and pace to keep them engaged. As a result, students improve their attitudes to learning and work from when they enter the school. Students, including those who initially have negative attitudes to school, enjoy their time in school. This is shown by the impressive data showing that attendance is currently over 98% across the school and over 99% for students of statutory school age. They also show significant improvements in their sociability and confidence.

Student's behaviour is good and although some disruption to students' own learning was seen during the inspection, this was handled very well and consistently by all

staff. Due to the nature of the disruption, it did not impact on the learning of others. Although students enter school, often with challenging behaviour, they are quickly given respect for what they bring to the school community and clearly established routines and strategies rapidly encourage positive behaviour.

Students' develop cultural understanding well through specifically taught cross-curricular themes such as 'Exploring Another Culture'. Such experiences help students gain an appreciation and respect for cultural diversity that promotes tolerance and harmony. Provision enables them to accept more readily the differences that there are within the school. Work to promote students' awareness of areas such as sex and relationships education, other religions, human rights and democracy are explored through strong joint working with boarding staff.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety of students is outstanding. All of the required health and safety policies, including guidance for child protection are in place and are implemented extremely well. Policies are robust, comprehensive and clear, and provide all of the necessary guidance for staff. The school's behaviour policy is effectively implemented, so that it is instrumental in bringing about significant improvements in behaviour.

Appropriate reference is made within the e-safety policy to the use and abuse of new technologies and cyber bullying. Individual behaviour plans are very well devised, consistently applied by all staff, and meet the needs of all students extremely effectively.

Robust risk assessments are in place and they accurately identify any risks associated with students, external visits or classroom activities. Procedures to ensure that the premises and accommodation are safe are also robust. Staff meet every day to discuss any issues which have arisen. Students are closely monitored to identify any problems so that they can be quickly rectified. The school carries out frequent checks on portable electrical appliances to ensure equipment is in good condition. Very good attention is paid to fire safety, with regular fire drills and evacuations in place. Smoke alarms are tested regularly and clear records are kept of fire alarm tests and checks. All fire fighting equipment is serviced regularly so that it is fully operational. All staff receive training, as a part of their induction programme in first aid and this is updated as required. All staff, including the designated person for child protection, have been trained at the appropriate level.

All students, who responded to questionnaires or were involved in discussions with the inspector, confirmed that they feel safe in the school. There is no evidence of bullying and the school has clear procedures in place should it occur. The school and welfare staff work closely together on an annual anti-bullying week, so that students are aware of the need to say 'no' if they find themselves being bullied. Students lead healthy lifestyles. They participate in a wide range of sporting and physical activities that keep them fit and ensure that they get enough exercise. Impressive work is also

done with local service providers, such as the local hospital, dentist, optician and general practitioner, so that students can access these services effectively so that they are kept in good health.

The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All of the required checks on staff and others are carried out and are recorded appropriately in the single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

There are adequate facilities and accommodation which enable students to learn safely and effectively. Classrooms are generally of an adequate size and are used as generic teaching areas. However, in some areas, decoration is tired and old and some teaching areas are overly cluttered. There is plenty of space for outdoor recreation and sporting activities. There is also a good range of additional facilities which meet students' particular needs. These include a soft play area, a gym, light room and an area for the teaching of food technology.

Provision of information

The school's prospectus provides parents, carers and others with all of the required information. It is clear, accurate, detailed and up-to-date, including a breakdown of qualifications gained by students in 2011 and the destinations of those who left the school. Parents and carers are provided with suitable annual reports about the attainment and progress made by their children.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedures meet regulatory requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure that there is a satisfactory standard and adequate maintenance of decoration in all areas of the school (paragraph 23(p)).

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- improve the consistency of teaching in post-16, so that all students can make consistently good progress in all lessons
- use the wealth of evidence collected about students' personal and social development to evaluate the overall progress that they make in their personal development.

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		
Date school opened	March 2000		
Age range of pupils	8–19 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 18	Girls: 2	Total: 20
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of boarders	Boys: 15	Girls: 1	Total: 16
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 18	Girls: 2	Total: 20
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 10	Girls: 1	Total: 11
Annual fees (day pupils)	£78,680		
Annual fees (boarders)	£237,121		
Headteacher	Suzanne Pennington		
Proprietor	SENAD Group		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 March 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Pegasus School

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed meeting and talking to you and seeing you working in your lessons.

Your school is providing you with a good education and provision for welfare, health and safety is outstanding. Your teachers, and other staff, know you very well and plan lessons which help you to make good progress academically and in your personal and communication development. The 24-hour curriculum that you have meets your needs well.

The staff look after you exceptionally well. You all feel safe and you all say that you enjoy school and you have been helped to manage your own behaviour better than before. You are given a lot of opportunities to participate in activities and lessons that you enjoy. I was particularly impressed by the way that you were all so engaged in your learning and how your behaviour improves because of the support you receive. Your attendance is very high, which also shows how much you enjoy coming to school.

I have asked the school to improve three areas: how they use the information that they collect about your personal and social improvements, so that they can support you even more effectively; to make teaching more consistent in the post-16 classes; and to improve the decoration in some areas of the school.

Thank you again and I would like to wish you all the best for your futures.

Yours sincerely

David Muir
Her Majesty's Inspector