

Rome Advice Note to DCSF (RAN)

For progress monitoring visits

School: Continuum School DCSF number: 928/6067 URN: 131802

AI: Trevor Watts

Date of visit: 23/03/2009

1. Context of the school

Farrow House School is an independent special school acquired by the Continuum Group in March 2005, previously having been known as Degra House School. Provision is made for up to 24 students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties between the ages of 11-16. The school is situated on a main road near to the centre of Northampton and presently takes day students placed by Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Essex, Buckinghamshire, Hillingdon and Oxfordshire local education authorities. At the time of this inspection there were fourteen full-time students (five of whom were female) and two part time students. Twelve have statements of special educational need and seven are 'looked after'. Most students are White British but a small number have other ethnic origins.

The s162A inspection, on 21 November 2007, judged the school to be inadequate, following a 'very challenging' period. The inspection saw failings in many regulations, but also saw 'good potential for improvement'. Since April 2008 a new headteacher has overseen many changes to the provision, and the outcomes of the school.

2. Compliance with the regulations

Regulations not met on inspection dated: 07/11/2007		Met/Not met:	Evidence:
1. The quality of education provided by the school			
Curriculum			
<i>(para no.)</i>	<i>(para wording)</i>	<i>(Met/Not met)</i>	<i>(inspector's evidence)</i>
1(2)	Does the school have a curriculum policy set out in writing and supported by	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clear policy and aims – agreed by students. ■ Lessons seen indicate good implementation of the policy and schemes. ■ Comprehensive schemes of work based on AQA KS3 and 4 strategies. ■ Particularly wide-ranging schemes for English

	appropriate plans and schemes of work, and does it implement it effectively?		<p>and maths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PE – school has small gym for exercise, badminton, interactive IT games (wii device). ■ Creative work includes music and art – latter is extensively used and thematic across the different subjects – eg Medieval theme, animation. ■ ICT is a major element within many topics. ■ A great deal of PSHE and discussion, involvement of students in all.
1(2)(c)	Does the policy enable students to acquire skills in speaking/listening/literacy/numeracy	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aims to give broad and balanced curriculum with functional literacy and numeracy targeted at vocational aspects, especially in KS4. ■ Clear IEP references to these basic skills. ■ The lessons include good elements of literacy and personal development routinely. ■ Students often have targets to complete, for instance, four pieces of individual written work per week in different subjects. ■ Cross-curricular aspects of basic skills are a feature of all lessons seen, and other lessons of which the planning was scrutinised. ■ Numeracy targets are also included in many lessons when relevant without stretching the core subject too much.
1(2)(i)	Does the curriculum provide the opportunity for all students to learn and make progress?	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is a good balanced spread of subjects that are designed in appropriate ways for the students here. ■ They are adapted for individuals according to interests and progress made. ■ The timetables reflect a good balance of time as well as subjects. There could be more element of choice at times. ■ Courses can lead to external certification such as BTEC (Skills for Working Life (motor, joinery, plastering, personal development, safety and hygiene)), and OCR Entry level science, art and design, Business studies, English, maths and Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALAN) level 2, and doing CLAIT (started but not yet officially registered to undertake the certification). ■ School sometimes has special weeks, such as Engineering and Science Week recently. ■ No smoking day was a success last week. ■ Food awareness week recently was a great success. ■ Headteacher does multi-cultural cooking each week – and has included Chinese, Mexican and Turkish / Iranian recently.

1(2)(j)	Is there adequate preparation of students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life?	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The PSHE curriculum includes citizenship, and it involves practical workshops, visits and discussions, visiting people – evidenced in photo album. ■ PSHE course and whole ethos revolve around self-control, esteem, getting on with peers and adults, being punctual and polite. ■ Connexions advisor calls; vocational visits for Year 9 up, mainly Year 10. ■ Three students have visited colleges recently and taken up courses (BTec and ICT) ■ There is an 'Independent Living' course which includes many aspects of home management, banking, hygiene. ■ Food technology programme aids independence and 'home survival'. ■ Course linked to college, land use and farming, H&S and vocational , and art education at link college.
Quality of teaching and assessment			
1(3)(a)	Does the teaching enable students to acquire new knowledge, and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught?	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The teaching is well aimed at individual students' needs and levels (see lesson EFs). ■ Students make good progress according to assessment charts. ■ Lesson observations by head are regular and go back a year, with consultant observations as well for comparison and moderation. Very positive in the main. ■ School has reviewed lesson planning, targets and assessment well, with new systems and targets.
1(3)(b)	Does the teaching encourage students to apply intellectual, physical or creative efforts and to show interest in their work and to think and learn for themselves?	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students mostly well motivated and interested, as seen in lessons. ■ School encourages clear discussion opportunities, mostly taken up well by students. ■ Good level and type of challenge e.g. in PE, art and music – e.g. listening to different styles of music and singing, including a pantomime performance at Christmas, with a two-day topic and performance on stage – being actively developed as a creative subject.
1(3)(c)	Are lessons well planned, are effective teaching methods and suitable activities used and is class time managed wisely?	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The planning is good. There is a good standard format that is well followed by staff. It is thorough and generally clear, with behavioural and academic targets and well-matched task sequences. ■ The pace is generally good, with prompt starts. ■ A variety of methods is used, including written work, investigations and experiments, discussions and use of computers.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Planning generally includes cross-curricular and literacy elements.
1(3)(f)	Are classroom resources of an adequate quality, quantity and range and are they used effectively?	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ICT and science upgraded with computers, equipment and books (£300 spent on books recently). ■ No vandalism of equipment these days, so little loss – only occasionally displays damaged. ■ Much access to internet and a lot of resources for English and maths. ■ Developing PE and music materials.
1(3)(g)	Is there a framework in place to assess students' work regularly and thoroughly and is information from such assessment utilised to plan teaching so that students can make progress?	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mainly through Goal Online – well and regularly done, past year's results, and last term for comparison, showing generally good progress. ■ Much photographic evidence of activities and visitors and visits. ■ Teacher assessments in line with National Curriculum (NC) descriptions. ■ Well used for planning IEPs and next set of lessons. ■ Clearly communicated / shared with students for next steps forward. ■ All well baselined and re-tested termly, with subsequent re-targeting and analysis of reasons for success or relative stagnation. Good graphing of the process – all students in all NC subjects. This has been on-going for almost a year.
1(4)	Does the school have in place a framework by which student performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents and/or, by national norms?	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clear analysis of reasons for levels of performance – from teaching style to home circumstances. Active training programme for staff. ■ NC levelled, use of Goal Online, and personal IEP targets each term. ■ Performance compared with other children with similar backgrounds in the Group (at Hartlepool). ■ Termly reporting to parents, refers to NC levels in all subjects and teacher assessments. ■ Fuller annual report – it is more complete and detailed, and will include success in external tests when appropriate.

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3. The welfare, health and safety of the students			
3(2)(b)	Has the school prepared and implemented written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are students at the school in compliance with DCSF guidance <i>Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education</i> (2007)?	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Full and very comprehensive policy and supporting documents.
3(7)	Are school staff deployed in such a way as to ensure the proper supervision of students?	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Always a teacher in the class – most are qualified, degree or vocational, and NVO. ■ Always at least one teaching assistant in the room. ■ Break and lunch times have staff rota for good supervision. ■ Particularly well supervised in practical lessons such as science, PE or where there is an element of risk. ■ Emergency help always at hand in case of behavioural problems. ■ No disruptions seen in lessons, nor heard in other classes. ■ Some verbal loudness handled well by staff.
3(8)	Does the school keep written records of sanctions imposed upon students for serious disciplinary offences?	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sanctions book kept properly and formally – bound and numbered pages, all required details entered. ■ Positive reward system.
5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation			
<i>Inspectors must evaluate the suitability of the accommodation for effective teaching and learning for all students.</i>			
5(j)	Having regard to the number, age and needs (including any special needs) of students, are all classrooms appropriate in size to allow effective teaching, and do all areas of the school not compromise health or safety?	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Newly extended and more spacious class teaching areas are good. ■ Staff rota and backup in lessons prevents disruptions affecting other students too much.
5(n)	Are classrooms and other parts of the school maintained in a tidy, clean and hygienic state?	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Most class areas are very neat, with good displays, undamaged. ■ No instances of student destruction in recent past are evident around the school. ■ Sinks in art room and science lab are dirty, a poor example to students. Head very surprised – will speak to teacher and cleaner (after a reminder last week).

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5(p)	Are the lighting, heating and ventilation in the classrooms and other parts of the school satisfactory and in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999?	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Whole building completely refurbished and extended. No reported difficulties in new classes or offices. Now two floors, not just one. ■ Whole premises seem to be warm and fresh, well lit. ■ The out-building classrooms are satisfactory – well furnished and equipped, though looking rather 'lived-in'.
5(r)	Are the furniture and fittings appropriately designed for the age and needs (including any special needs) of all students registered at the school?	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No sign of the kind of damage as at time of previous inspection. Senior staff report that aggression is now rare and damage minimal – occasional screwing up of paper rather than kicking doors as before. ■ Good quality fittings. ■ Appropriate size and amount of furniture.
6. The provision of information			
<i>Does the school provide to parents of students and of prospective students, and on request to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State, or a body approved under section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 the following information?</i>			
6(2)(b)	Where the proprietor is an individual, his full name, address for correspondence during both term time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which he may be contacted at all times, or, where the proprietor is a corporation, a Scottish firm or a body of persons, the address and telephone number of its registered or principal office.	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Brochure contains requisite data, including contact for proprietor.
6(2)(e)	Particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions.	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ These are now clear. They are mentioned in the brochure and expanded upon in readily available documents in school.
6(2)(f)	Particulars of educational and welfare provision for students with statements of SEN and for students for whom English is an additional language.	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ SEN policy is brief but adequate. It describes procedures and system for allocating resources and skills where needed. ■ IEPs form a large part of this process and enactment of the policy. ■ No EAL students at the moment, but policy includes them. ■ There is an appropriate DDA plan.
<i>Is the following information available, and does the school make it clear that parents of students and of prospective students may request it?</i>			
6(2)(i)	Particulars of academic	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NC levels are communicated to parents termly as part of termly reports on behavioural and

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	performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations.		academic progress. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Also success towards IEP personal targets. ■ Annual reports are set to include external accreditation (none previously entered).
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Indicate in the table below the quality of any lessons seen.

EF no.	Year group	Subject	Teaching <i>(grade)</i>	Progress <i>(grade)</i>	Curriculum <i>(grade)</i>
4	8, 9	English	2	2	2
5	8, 9	Science	1	1	1
6	10, 11	PSHE	3	3	2
8	10, 11	Art	2	2	2

3. Recommendations to DCSF

- The school has made good progress and now meets all the regulations.