

Ferndearle

Independent school progress monitoring inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Fatiha Maitland

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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 inspection 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

Ferndearle School was established in 2001 in a detached house in a residential area of Folkestone in Kent. It is owned by Ferndearle Child Care Services and operates a small residential provision for 52-week care for pupils aged between eight and 13 years of age. Currently, all the pupils are from different local authorities. It was registered as a small residential school for up to seven pupils in December 2007. There are currently seven children in residence, six of whom are on roll in the school. One pupil attends day education and commutes to school. A small proportion of pupils are placed in off-site maintained schools. Ferndearle caters for pupils who have barriers to learning as a result of emotional and behavioural problems associated with past traumatic experiences. It provides a transition education for pupils who may have a statement of special educational needs or who are awaiting the issue of a statement, and who require education in a small environment while preparing for integration into mainstream or special schools. The school aims to 'strive to develop... many positive qualities to bring a sense of direction and purpose to young people's lives'.

The school was first inspected by Ofsted on 20 January 2009.

Context of the inspection

At the time of the inspection on 20 January 2009 the school did not meet two regulations. The school did not provide classroom resources of an adequate quality, quantity and range and it did not meet all the requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation according to the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools.

The school received a progress monitoring visit from an education inspector on 9 October 2009 and was still found to fail to comply with the same regulation about the provision of classrooms resources.

The school subsequently submitted a request for a material change so that it could extend the range of its provision to include the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2.

The school produced two action plans to address required improvements. The first action plan which was submitted was rejected in March 2010. The second action plan was evaluated on 2 June 2010. These action plans also incorporated additional required actions related to the curriculum and premises in relation to the requested material change. The evaluation of the second action plan sought to determine not only the extent to which the school met the failed regulation relating to resources, but also the extent to which the school had acceptable plans to enable it to provide for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2, following its request for a material change. It was judged to be broadly satisfactory, but required some improvements, including some related to the curriculum.

The school would like to retain its registration for pupils aged between eight and 13 years of age. Although previously, the school sought to provide education for children aged from four to seven years, on the day of the inspection, the proprietor decided it would like to provide education only for pupils aged from five to seven years of age, for Years 1 and 2, and not now for children the Early Years Foundation Stage.

(In relation to the residential provision, an unannounced welfare inspection took place on 9 July 2009. The inspection found that most of the requirements were met in relation to the national minimum standards, with two exceptions: one related to training, and the other to the monthly monitoring of records, where it was partly met. However, other new deficiencies were identified during this July inspection and further actions were required from the school. The residential provision was last inspected on 17 February 2010 and the overall quality was judged to be satisfactory.)

This is the report of the second monitoring visit to the school to follow up its progress in meeting the education regulation relating to resources but also to check on the adequacy of the school's plans to support its request for a material change.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

In relation to the shortcoming concerning classroom resources identified in the inspection in January 2009, the school has now purchased a sufficient range of resources to support the delivery of its curriculum. This weakness has been remedied and the requirement is now met.

In relation to the request for a material change, there are sufficient resources and plans to meet the individual needs of all pupils, including those in Years 1 and 2. Further, the school's curriculum policy has been extended and is supported by suitable schemes of work, outline plans and timetables for pupils in Key Stage 1. The planned curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 will be based on the National Curriculum and will adopt a thematic approach. Links between subjects, for example,

between English and information and communication technology, will be established. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship will have a high profile.

There is an appropriate emphasis on improving the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum will be adapted to meet the differing learning needs of all pupils. The school has drawn up a range of plans which will be adapted to support individual needs. There are arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' progress. The assessment policy refers to the use of the P-scales for pupils who are attaining below the levels of the National Curriculum. Comprehensive individual education plans (IEPs) are planned to generate learning targets which will be shared with the pupils and their carers. The school has acquired a range of resources to support the delivery of the intended curriculum. Fittings and furniture are appropriately designed for the age and needs of all pupils. The school has made suitable provision to meet the requirements relating to its request for a material change.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school has made good progress and now meets all regulatory requirements.

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special, for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
Date school opened	2001		
Age range of pupils	8–13		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 4	Girls: 2	Total: 6
Number of boarders	Boys: 3	Girls: 2	Total: 5
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 4	Girls: 2	Total: 6
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 4	Girls: 2	Total: 6
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 867 per week		
Annual fees (boarders)	£156,780		
Address of school	Ferndearle, Heather Lodge, 2 Radnor Park West, Folkestone, CT19 5HH		
Telephone number	01303 850182		
Email address	manager@ferndearle.co.uk		
Headteacher	Ms J Kershaw		
Proprietor	Mr R Dearle		