

Ferndearle School

Independent school progress report

DCSF registration number	886/6126
Unique reference number	135510
URN for registered social care	SC023637
Inspection number	343916
Inspection dates	9 October 2009
Reporting inspector	R Kapadia

Age group: 8–13

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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 2002,¹ as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.²

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

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. Currently, all the pupils are from Essex. It was registered as a small residential school for up to seven pupils in December 2007. There are currently four children in residence, one of whom is on the roll of the school. A large proportion of pupils are placed in off-site maintained schools. Ferndearle caters for pupils who have blocks 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 need or who are awaiting such 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'.

Context of the visit

The previous inspection was undertaken on 20 January 2009; an unannounced welfare inspection took place on 9 July 2009. This is the first visit to the school to follow up its progress.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

At the inspection in 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 requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation according to the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools.

In the latter respect, the school was required to:

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

- ensure all staff undertake regular fire drills and at different times of the 24-hour period
- ensure all parts of the home that are used by the young people are suitably furnished, equipped, kept clean, reasonably decorated and maintained
- evaluate the effectiveness of the sanctions used for the young people
- explore appropriate training in care management for the manager to undertake
- ensure the home's records are monitored and signed at least once a month by the manager
- ensure the young people have access to and a choice in the selection of newspapers, books and magazines subject to their availability.

The school has taken a series of actions relating to regulations and requirements not met at the inspection in January 2009. It has made satisfactory progress overall in implementing its action plan. It is on course to meet the regulations and national minimum standards.

The school produced an action plan covering both the regulations. It stated that classroom resources had been evaluated and staff given guidance and training in their use. The school concluded that resources were now suitable to the level of work. It also stated that various actions were in process to meet the national minimum standards.

This inspection finds that some evaluation of resources has been undertaken and guidance and support given to staff as planned. However, there is no written evidence of systematic monitoring and evaluation of resources. Resources are still not suitable to the level of work. For example, a dated reading book is still being used and there is an insufficient range of reading materials to support the planned curriculum. In mathematics, there are insufficient resources for pupils to use when undertaking practical activities. The school has not undertaken a systematic evaluation of resources to ensure that they are sufficient to meet the requirements of its planned curriculum in the core subjects.

The national minimum standards were inspected by a social care inspector on 9 July 2009. The inspection found that most of the requirements identified above are now met, with one exception (relating to training) and one (relating to monthly monitoring of records) where it was partly met. Some other new deficiencies were identified during the July inspection. Further actions are required, as noted below. Some progress has already been made on these items, such as putting the required photograph on a staff file and providing staff with job descriptions.

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 2003³ as amended ('the Regulations'), as follows:

- ensure that classroom resources are of an adequate quality, quantity and range and are they used effectively (paragraph 1(3)(f))
- meet the relevant National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and Children's Homes (paragraph 5(u)).

The following section lists the actions which must be taken so that the registered persons meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards.

Std.	Action
22	■ maintain an accurate and up-to-date record of measures of control used (Regulation 17)
26	■ ensure all fire exits are maintained and accessible to provide adequate means of escape for the young people (Regulation 32)
27	■ ensure that a recent photograph of all staff is held on file (Regulation 26 Schedule 2)
28	■ ensure all staff including the manager have received job descriptions and person specifications related to the home's Statement of Purpose, which state clearly their responsibilities, the duties currently expected of them and their line of accountability (Regulation 27(b))
33	■ ensure the records of complaints, absence, behaviour management and others referred to in Schedule 6 are monitored and signed at least once a month to identify any patterns or issues requiring action (Regulation 34) (previous action – not met by due date)
34	■ ensure that the home's manager is appropriately qualified to NVQ level 4 in childcare and management, or the equivalent (Regulation 8) (previous action – not met by due date)

³ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm

School details

Name of school	Ferndearle		
DCSF number	886/6126		
Unique reference number	135510		
Type of school	Special school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2001		
Age range of pupils	8-13 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of boarders	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (boarders)	£156,780		
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Kershaw		
Proprietor	Mr Robin Dearle		
Reporting inspector	Mr R Kapadia		
Dates of inspection	9 October 2009		