

Valley House

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	John Gush

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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.

Information about the school

Valley House is a small school catering for residential pupils. It is located in rural accommodation in Warwickshire owned by Young Foundations Limited. It was registered in May 2007 as a school providing for up to six students aged from 12 to 17 years with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and those with autistic spectrum disorder. There are currently three students on roll. Two of the students attend part time and are also on roll at other educational provision. One student has a statement of special educational needs and all are looked after children. The school aims to re-engage students in education, enable them to develop cooperative and interpersonal skills and to acquire study skills necessary to realise their learning potential. The school's last inspection took place in May 2009 and progress monitoring visits took place in November 2009 and June 2010.

Evaluation of the school

Valley House provides a satisfactory quality of education for its students; this is an improvement since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and assessment and the school's curriculum are satisfactory and, as a result, students make satisfactory progress. Overall the students' behaviour is satisfactory as is the provision that the school makes for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding arrangements, is inadequate. Regulatory failings reported in the previous inspection report have been addressed and the most recent monitoring report found that all regulations were met. However, during the current inspection a considerable number of regulations were not met.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory and covers all the required areas of learning. There are suitable courses for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and religious education. The curriculum provides students who are preparing for transition into local mainstream provision with appropriate subject knowledge. It benefits from being flexible and can be adapted to the specific needs and interests of students. It helps involved students adequately in their education, especially those who have in the past become disengaged with education.

Appropriate emphasis is placed on literacy and numeracy and daily lessons and different tasks are provided, although some of the work set does not always specifically reflect students' different levels of ability. Information and communication technology (ICT) is available in the classroom but is not always used well enough to

support teaching and learning. For example, during a lesson about Guy Fawkes material was downloaded from the internet but many opportunities were missed for the students to be involved with this process or for them to research the topic themselves.

Students learn about personal, social and health education as part of the 'towards independence' curriculum. This is a series of lessons aimed at helping them to develop some of the skills and attitudes they will need when they leave school. This work is appropriately reinforced by personal development targets which they work on with residential staff. Students gain useful guidance regarding choices for their future through visits from careers advisers, who also provide information about links with other local provision and help to identify work experience placements.

A range of suitable out-of-school visits support students' learning and reward them for their efforts. Students take part in physical education activities, taking advantage both of the extensive school grounds and the local leisure centre and swimming pool. The curriculum, and the way it is implemented, ensures that the requirements of the students' statements of special educational needs are met for the age range of the students admitted.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Teachers demonstrate patience and persistence together with consistent good humour and provide effective support for students who display emotionally volatile behaviour. They also make suitable use of their subject knowledge and teaching experience to engage students' interest adequately in lessons; one student who is new to the school commented about how good it was to have a 'proper teacher' at last! However, individual learning programmes are not always planned in sufficient detail and students are sometimes unclear of the purpose of their learning activities or how these relate to their targets. Assessment of students' work is fairly regular but it is not always detailed enough so that teachers can be sure about students' prior knowledge and whether they are achieving as well as they could. Classroom resources are adequate in general but there are too few computer workstations and there is insufficient science equipment to enable the school to meet all aspects of the Key Stage 4 curriculum.

Students make satisfactory progress although, for some, their progress is occasionally hampered by their emotional and behavioural difficulties. In recent years students have been successful in achieving external accreditation in GCSE English and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Towards Independence course. Students' folders of work show varying levels of pride and perseverance in their work. For example, some folders are neat and show good progress in aspects of the work, while others are less well presented with some unfinished work evident. Students' work is marked with encouraging comments and suggestions for improvement; occasionally, there is not enough attention paid to improving students' presentation.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Although some of the students are reluctant to say so, they appear to enjoy many aspects of their school life. This is reflected both in regular attendance and in the frequent good humoured interchanges observed between students, teachers and the learning and care assistants. The school encourages and supports regular interaction with the local community and the development of positive relationships outside the school. Students visit the local village using the shop and other facilities including activities in the village hall. The community policeman is a regular visitor to the school, as are other members of the local area. Students develop and display self-confidence through regular school and house meetings and through general social interaction, for instance at the meal table. During the inspection a valuable conversation took place between students over lunch regarding tolerance of different cultures. In particular one conversation relating to traveller communities, one of the students learned to moderate, strong opinions and to listen to others' views. Understanding and tolerance of different cultures is also developed through religious education and topic work involving research activities in the local library. Students show some awareness of British institutions and services, for instance they know about the local health services available to them, but this aspect of provision is insufficiently developed.

Students' behaviour is satisfactory. They are aware of the impact that their unsettled emotional lives can have on themselves and others and they make satisfactory progress over time in managing their anger and anti-social behaviour. On a library visit during the inspection the students showed that they understood how to behave well in a community setting.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Students' welfare, health and safety is inadequate. This is primarily because the policies and procedures in use do not adequately reflect the requirements of an independent school and are not always robustly implemented. The procedures identified in the school's child protection policy are adequately followed but the policy does not have regard to the relevant Department for Education guidance. The school's headteacher fulfils the role of designated child protection officer (DCPO) but she is not named as such in the policy. Although she is well trained in child protection she has not received the required training for a DCPO. In addition, some teachers and other members of staff have not received appropriate child protection training.

The school has effective staff recruitment procedures and generally pays adequate attention to the health and safety of students in the school. There are suitable and appropriately implemented policies and procedures for managing behaviour and recording incidents and any sanctions imposed. Thorough and detailed risk assessments are prepared for each individual student but the school has no procedures for assessing the risks associated with educational trips or visits. Useful policies are available in relation to bullying but they do not take account of recent

guidance, and in particular do not pay sufficient regard to the potential harm through cyber bullying.

Fire risk is regularly assessed and equipment is routinely checked. Well-recorded fire drills and effective fire safety information and training ensure that students and staff can take appropriate action in the event of fire. Staff are suitably trained to implement the appropriate first aid policy and students are effectively supervised while at school. An adequate attendance register correctly identifies the names of the students on the school's roll and records their attendance. However the admissions register does not contain all the information it should.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has carried out all the required checks to ensure the suitability of staff members and the proprietors to work with children. It has not, however, gathered these together, as required, into a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is located in well-maintained buildings of modern construction and set in extensive grounds in a rural area. There are outdoor facilities for play and relaxation, as well as games and physical education. Environmental education takes place in the school's woodland, allotment and poultry run. During the past year a new classroom has been built some hundred metres distant from the main school building. This provides an effective learning environment. Some inadequate security arrangements at the school were reported to senior managers.

Provision of information

Regular briefings as well as formal termly reports provide information about students' progress and achievement for parents, carers and others. A prospectus provides general information about the school and explains that a range of policy documents is available on request from the school. However, not all the required information is made available.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a policy that ensures that parents, carers and others are aware of their rights to make a complaint about the school and how they can do so. The policy does not, however, fulfil all the required elements of a complaints policy for an independent school.

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.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- ensure that the teaching involves well-planned lessons, effective teaching methods, suitable activities and appropriate management of class time (paragraph 3(c))
- ensure that classroom resources of an adequate quality, quantity and range and that they are used effectively (paragraph 3(f)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (standards in part 2) and must:

- ensure that provision is made to give pupils a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England (paragraph 5(d)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and ensure that these arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7)
- ensure that there are effective procedures to prevent bullying which have regard to the DfE guidance *Preventing and tackling bullying - advice for school leaders, staff and governing bodies*¹ (paragraph 10)
- ensure that there are effective procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety on educational visits which have regard to DfE guidance² (paragraph 12)
- ensure that there is an admission register which is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006³ (paragraph 17).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors (standards in part 4) and must:

- ensure that all relevant information is recorded in a register so that it is capable of being reproduced in a legible form (paragraph 22(2))
- ensure that, for each member of staff appointed on or **after** 1 May 2007, the register shows that the following checks were made, including the date on which each check was completed or the certificate obtained:
 - the person's identity

¹ www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f0076899/preventing-and-tackling-bullying.

² www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/healthandsafety/f00191759/departmental-advice-on-health-and-safety-for-schools.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made.

- the person is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (ISA barred list), or there is no direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act in respect of that person (List 99), or disqualification prohibition or restriction having the same effect
- record of relevant qualifications, if appropriate
- whether an enhanced criminal records bureau (CRB) certificate was obtained
- in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, the further checks made which have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State
- record of their right to work in the United Kingdom (paragraph 22(3))
- ensure that for each member of staff appointed at any time **before** 1 May 2007, the register shows that the following checks have been made, including the date on which each check was completed or the certificate obtained:
 - of the person’s identity
 - to establish whether the person is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (ISA barred list), or there is no direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act in respect of that person (List 99), or disqualification prohibition or restriction having the same effect
 - of relevant qualifications where appropriate
 - whether an enhanced CRB certificate was obtained
 - in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, the further checks made which have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 22(4))
- ensure that, in relation to staff not directly employed by the school, the register shows whether written notification has been received from the employment business that it has carried out the checks referred to in 20(2)(a) together with the date the written notification that each check was made or certificate obtained, was received. Checks required include:
 - the person’s identity
 - that the person is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (ISA barred list), or there is no direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act in respect of that person (List 99), or disqualification prohibition or restriction having the same effect
 - where appropriate the person’s qualifications

- in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, checks in regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State
- the person’s right to work in the United Kingdom
- an enhanced criminal record bureau (CRB) check or has obtained a certificate in response to such a check made by it or another employment business. The CRB check must have been obtained no more than three months before the date on which the person is due to begin work at the school; or the person has already had an enhanced CRB check from working in a school or further education institution not more than three months previously

and

- if an enhanced CRB certificate was obtained before the person was due to begin work and if it contained a disclosure, the school obtained a copy of the certificate from the employment business (paragraph 22(5))
- ensure that, in relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after **1 May 2007**, the register shows whether the check referred to in 21(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained. Checks required include:
 - an enhanced CRB check and, where requested by the Secretary of State, is countersigned by the Secretary of State
 - the individual’s identity and their right to work in the United Kingdom

and

- in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, further checks in regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 22(6))
- ensure that, in relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor who was appointed at any time before **1 May 2007**, the register shows whether the checks referred to in 21(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained. Checks required include:

- an enhanced CRB check and, where requested by the Secretary of State, is countersigned by the Secretary of State

and

- in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, further checks in regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 22(7)).

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 are adequate security arrangements in place for the grounds and buildings (paragraph 23(d)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information (standards in part 6) and must:

- ensure that the proprietor has ensured that the following information has been provided to all persons listed in part 6 of the guidance:
 - the school’s address and telephone number and the name of the headteacher
 - where the proprietor is an individual, their full name, address for correspondence during both term time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which they may be contacted at all times, or, where the proprietor is a corporation or a body of persons, the address and telephone number of its registered or principal office
 - where there is a board of governors, the name and address for correspondence of its chairperson
 - a statement of the school’s ethos (including any religious ethos) and aims (paragraph 24(1)(a))
- ensure that the following information has been made available to the persons listed in part 6 of the guidance:
 - particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions
 - particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs and for pupils for whom English is an additional language
 - particulars of the curriculum policy of the school as required under part 1, paragraph 2
 - particulars of policies relating to bullying, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving as required under part 3, paragraph 9
 - particulars of the arrangements for tackling bullying, and for promoting pupils’ health and safety on the school premises and on educational visits as required under part 3 paragraphs 10, 11 and 12
 - particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations
 - details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year
 - the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 24(1)(b))

- ensure that a copy of the safeguarding children policy (as required under part 3, paragraph 7) is published on the school's website, or where no such website exists, is sent to parents of pupils, and of prospective pupils, on request (paragraph 24(1)(c))
- ensure that, where a pupil who is registered at the school is wholly or partly funded by the local authority, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is submitted to the local authority and on request to the Secretary of State (paragraph 24(1)(h)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the manner in which complaints are to be handled (standards in part 7) and must:

- ensure that the complaints procedure sets out clear timescales for the management of the complaint (paragraph 25(c))
- ensure that, if the parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint, there is provision for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 25(f))
- ensure that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, there is provision that one person on the panel is independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 25(g))
- ensure that the procedure allows for parents to attend the panel hearing and, if they wish, to be accompanied (paragraph 25(h))
- ensure that the complaints procedure provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and does the procedure stipulate that a copy of the findings and recommendations are:
 - sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained aboutand
 - available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher (paragraph 25(i)).

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	4 May 2007		
Age range of pupils	12-17 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys:	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 2	Girls:	Total: 2
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 1	Girls:	Total: 1
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 2	Girls: 1	Total: 3
Annual fees (residential pupils)	£46,000		
Address of school	Nuneaton Rd Fillongley CV7 8DL		
Telephone number	01676 542875		
Email address	cheryllester@youngfoundations.com		
Headteacher	Cheryl Lester		
Proprietor	Barbara Thompson		

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.



9 November 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Valley House, Fillongley, CV7 8DL

Many thanks for welcoming my colleague and I when we visited your school this week. We found that you were making satisfactory progress in your work and in your behaviour and we enjoyed seeing you making an effort in school.

The education at your school is satisfactory and so is the way you develop personally. We felt that the school could provide better support for your learning if staff had a clearer idea of your interests and abilities. We have asked teachers to make more use of this information to improve the way they plan your lessons to help you to make better progress with your work.

The way the school provides for you welfare health and safety is inadequate overall. We have asked the teachers to carry out a careful review of all aspects of the policies and procedures used to make sure that you are kept safe and protected in school and to improve them where necessary.

It was good to see that you are making an effort to manage your behaviour and to take part in the learning activities that are available for you. Your teachers are keen to help and support you in this. Do try to accept their support and to make the most of this opportunity.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

John Gush
Lead inspector