

# The Boulders Learning and Skills Centre

Independent school progress report

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DCSF registration number	886/6127
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135537
Inspection number	346474
Inspection dates	22 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Richard Winter

This inspection visit to the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 at the request of the registering authority for independent schools.

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

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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<sup>1</sup>, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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**

The Boulton Learning and Skills Centre opened two years ago. The centre provides education for students who are resident at homes run by the proprietor. It is the only school owned by the proprietor. All students are looked after by their local authorities and have special educational needs associated with significant emotional and behavioural difficulties. Students often join and leave the centre at short notice, according to changes in their residential placements. Characteristically, students have had extended periods of absence or exclusion from school and severely disrupted home lives prior to coming to the centre. Some are young offenders. There are currently nine students on roll. The aim is for all students to be educated on the centre site but in the event of a student not being able to access the facility for a time, because of significant risks in relation to behaviour and well-being, staff provide education at the home. Following the remodelling of an additional building on site, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) recently extended the centre's registration to admit up to 15 students between the ages of 12 and 17 years. The centre's mission statement is 'to develop young people's self-knowledge and self-esteem by raising achievement within a supportive environment'.

## **Context of the visit**

The centre was inspected in May 2009, at which time a number of the regulations were not met. An action plan was submitted in July 2009 and this is the first visit to monitor the centre's progress towards completing its intended actions.

## **Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan**

The inspection of May 2009 found that the centre did not have suitable schemes of work for all subjects taught. Since the inspection, the centre has experienced difficulties with a high turnover of staff and the teacher responsible for the curriculum has been only recently appointed. Nevertheless, the centre has made progress in extending its curriculum documentation and schemes of work and there is a clear vision with realistic timescales of how this development is to be completed.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

The requirement is not met as the schemes of work are not yet complete and their implementation is still at an early stage.

The inspection found that the centre did not have sufficient planned provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE). The curriculum now includes a wide variety of suitable PSHE topics which are covered at several points on the timetable, at breakfast club and as part of Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) sessions. Individual feedback with teachers at the end of each day also provides an informal discussion forum on personal issues that are current for each student. This requirement to provide a planned PSHE course is now met.

The inspection of May 2009 judged that the centre did not plan lessons effectively to meet students' needs. There is now evidence of lesson planning to meet different learning needs, although this is not always on an individual basis. Teachers plan variations in content, learning objectives and resources for small groups with similar abilities, although this differs in degree from subject to subject. Lessons are planned with a variety of activities so that there are opportunities for students to be engaged in their learning in a practical way. However, there is insufficient clarity in the planning for individual students as most do not have individual education plans, nor is it clear what their behavioural targets are or how these are to be communicated to them. The centre does not produce these plans sufficiently quickly to match the rapid turnover of students. The outcomes of lessons are not reviewed with students, so that there is no feedback to students on whether any learning or behavioural targets have been achieved. These weaknesses mean that the requirement is still not met.

The centre did not have an effective system to assess students' progress and did not make sufficient use of assessment information to plan the teaching. The systems proposed in the action plan for the assessment and tracking of students' progress were found not to suit the students' needs. A more suitable commercial package is now being brought into use, so that the requirement to have an assessment framework in place is now met. Annual reviews of students' progress are carried out and half-termly interim assessments are undertaken where students have been at the centre for at least this period of time. The requirement to make effective use of assessment information in the planning of lessons is not yet met as the implementation of the new assessment system is at an early stage.

The inspection of May 2009 found that the centre did not provide students with sufficient insight into the country's institutions and into cultures other than their own. Citizenship is now part of the timetable. There are a variety of visits from several outside agencies including the local police and the drugs awareness coordinator. Students have undertaken a range of activities, projects and visits which provide them with sufficient understanding of other cultures.

Omissions within the safeguarding and child protection policies noted at the last inspection have been rectified. The child protection officer has received training to the required standard. At the time of this visit, two recently recruited members of

staff had not received their safeguarding training, although this had been booked. This meant that the centre was not fully compliant with safeguarding requirements.

The centre has improved its recording of admissions, incidents and sanctions, which was previously unsatisfactory. The centre now maintains an admission register containing information that meets requirements. The incident file contains information about any sanctions imposed by the centre and implemented in the care homes.

In order to meet requirements for the premises, the centre has provided a room which is suitably equipped for students who are ill. The outside play area is now suitable as it has been resurfaced since the last inspection.

Various particulars in the provision of information for prospective students and carers which were not made available at the time of the last inspection have now been added to the prospectus, the admissions pack and the centre's website. All the requirements in this respect are now met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

As a result of this inspection visit, the centre must take action to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003<sup>2</sup> as amended ('the Regulations'), as follows:

- establish and implement appropriate plans and schemes of work for all subjects (paragraph 1(2))
- ensure that lessons are well planned, and that effective teaching methods and suitable activities are used to support behaviour and learning (paragraph 1(3)(c))
- establish a framework to assess students' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from such assessment to plan teaching so that students can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g))
- ensure that all staff have received child protection training to the required standard (paragraph 3(2)(b)).

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<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm)

## School details

<b>Name of school</b>	The Boulters Learning and Skills Centre		
<b>DCSF number</b>	886/6127		
<b>Unique reference number (URN)</b>	135537		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties		
<b>Status</b>	Independent		
<b>Date school opened</b>	1 April 2008		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	12–17 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 5	Girls: 4	Total: 9
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need</b>	Boys: 3	Girls: 2	Total: 5
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 4	Girls: 4	Total: 8
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£33,800		
<b>Address of school</b>	Units 12–13 Oare Gunpowder Works Bysingwood Road Faversham Kent ME13 7UD		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 529184		
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:lscott@theboulters.com">lscott@theboulters.com</a>		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs L Scott		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr A Boulter		
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Richard Winter		
<b>Dates of inspection</b>	22 January 2010		