

The Boulters Learning and Skills Centre

Independent school progress monitoring inspection report

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Reporting inspector	David Young

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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.^{1,2}

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

The Boulters Learning and Skills Centre opened in 2008. The centre was taken over by a new proprietor, Rushcliffe Care, in July 2010. The centre provides education for students who are resident at homes run by the proprietor. All students are either looked after by their local authorities or have social care intervention, 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. The centre admits pupils whose education has become disrupted, either due to domestic circumstances or due to challenging behaviour. Some are young offenders. There are currently seven students, all boys, on roll.

Students may be temporarily educated in the home if they have been out of education for a time or if they refuse to attend the centre. The centre is registered 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 inspection

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 a monitoring visit took place in January 2010 to check the school's progress with the implementation of its action plan. Following the monitoring visit a further action plan was submitted in May 2010 stating how the school would address the three regulations which remained unmet. This further monitoring visit was made to check the school's progress with the implementation of its most recent action plan.

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

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

At the time of the previous monitoring visit, schemes of work for all subjects taught had been introduced. However, a whole-school curriculum policy and subject policies were not in place. The school's action plan indicated that the policies had been prepared. This visit found that an overall curriculum policy and subject policies have now been written and provide a clear rationale for the curriculum and the subjects within it. The curriculum is based on the AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance) Unit Award Scheme and consists of units of work for each subject. The individual subjects are timetabled in a weekly pattern and teachers produce plans for individual lessons based on the curriculum framework.

The previous monitoring visit found there was still insufficient clarity in the planning for individual students as most did not have individual education plans (IEPs), nor was it clear to them what their behavioural targets were, or how these were to be communicated to them. The action plan indicated that IEPs had been prepared and that targets were communicated to students. This visit found that when students join the school, baseline testing takes place against National Curriculum levels in English and mathematics. For students who remain on roll, assessments are repeated every six weeks and progress is recorded. Progress records are kept in individual student files and the school has identified the need to maintain a spreadsheet providing an overview of whole-school students' progress. Each student now has an individual education plan and a behaviour management plan. The regular review of these enables targets for improvement to become increasingly specific. Individual learning needs are highlighted on teachers' lesson plans and differentiation is also built in to planning. Teachers review learning with individual students at the end of each lesson. Additional feedback sessions are also timetabled later in every day, involving teachers, teaching assistants and students in review of progress. This review, while primarily targeted at review of academic progress, also includes a focus on students' behavioural needs. Outcomes from progress reviews are recorded electronically and students have individual memory sticks on which to record examples of work to demonstrate progress.

The previous monitoring inspection judged that the requirement to make effective use of assessment information in the planning of lessons was not met as the implementation of the new assessment system was at an early stage. Since that time, the use of baseline assessment has provided an appropriate starting point for planning work for individual students. The regular six-weekly re-assessment, together with information from the daily review process, provides teachers with a good understanding of students' current attainments and areas for improvement. Teachers are aware of the National Curriculum levels at which students are working in English and mathematics, and make appropriate use of their knowledge of students' attainment levels in the planning and assessment of all subjects. The evidence from Unit Award records provides further information about new learning

and standards attained. Teachers now have a variety of evidence of progress and use this information to individualise their planning for learning.

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 school for students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties		
Date school opened	1 April 2008		
Age range of pupils	12–17		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 7	Girls: 0	Total: 7
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 5	Girls: 0	Total: 5
Annual fees (day pupils)	£33,800		
Address of school	Units 12–13 Oare Gunpowder Works Bysingwood Road Faversham Kent ME13 7UD		
Telephone number	01795 537043		
Email address	lscott@theboulters.com		
Headteacher	Mrs L Scott		
Proprietor	Rushcliffe Care		