

Prospect School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	8116008
Unique Reference Number	134849
Inspection number	322052
Inspection dates	20 - 21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Graham HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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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, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of social care took place at the same time and the findings are in a separate report. Inspectors worked together to share their evidence.

Information about the school

Prospect School is a small, secondary special school attached to a children's home which is owned by the same proprietor. The school is located in a village near Hull. It caters for the needs of up to six students between the ages of 10 and 16 years of age. All students have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and most have suffered from significant disruption to their education. There are currently four students on roll one of whom has a statement of special educational need. The school aims to, *'foster within each individual a sense of self respect to enable them to take their place as a self-disciplined, confident, responsible and acceptable member of the community.'* The school opened in 2004 and was the previous inspection of education was in June 2005.

Evaluation of the school

Prospect School meets its aims very successfully. It provides a good education for its students and ensures that they enjoy school. As a result of a good curriculum and good teaching, students make good progress whatever their starting points. The provision made for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and the provision for their welfare, health and safety is good. The school meets nearly all the regulations and has made good progress since its last inspection.

The school and home meet the National Minimum Standards for children's homes and exceed a number of them. The social care judgement is that the outcomes for young people remain good with outstanding practice in enjoying and achieving.

Quality of education

The quality of education is good. The curriculum is good. It is based upon the National Curriculum and Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) guidelines. There are appropriate policies in place for all subjects. The school recognises the importance of the basic skills of English and mathematics but also ensures that students receive a well-rounded education. In order to make learning more interesting and motivating, subjects are linked together around themes. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used in all subjects to make work more enjoyable. Students develop ICT skills and learn how to use these in their daily lives.

There are opportunities for students to develop their creativity and art is particularly well developed. The school, in partnership with the home, ensures that students are well prepared for independent living. They learn how to cook healthy and nutritious meals. One girl produced appetising menus which would have done credit to a four star restaurant. She shopped for ingredients and produced the meals on a very limited budget. Students learn a modern foreign language and have three hours of physical education a week. Personal, social and health education is fully implemented and underpins all that the school does.

Students are given effective careers guidance and a great deal of practical experience and support. There are good links with the connexions advisor. As a result, students have realistic and achievable aspirations. One student has been re-integrated into a local secondary school and will begin a GCSE course next year. Another is enrolled on a young apprenticeship scheme and has a work placement; she attends the school on a part-time basis. The choice of courses is carefully matched to the needs and interests of students and they are given good support to ensure that these placements are successful. Students who continue at the school receive an education which is appropriate to their needs. All students have a reasonable understanding of British history and traditions. A good range of extra-curricular activities mean that students can develop their own interests. These include horse riding, gardening and golf.

Teaching and assessment are good. Students join the school with a range of skills and abilities. However, since they have suffered considerable disruption to their education, most can do much less than would normally be expected for their age. Some have not attended school regularly and others have moved from one school to another. As a result, the school does not always know how well students have attained at their previous schools. Students are assessed on entry, if possible, using a range of tests. The school also assesses reading ability. The progress made by students is carefully tracked and they have targets which are well matched to their needs and current attainment. Where appropriate, students are entered for national tests and examinations. This is a considerable achievement for these students demonstrating that they have 'caught up' on previous underachievement and that they have the confidence and motivation to be assessed with others of their age. Students also complete awards through the AQA.

Teaching is good. Teachers enjoy their work and are committed to giving students the best chance possible. They use creative approaches which mean that students enjoy learning and participate well. Lesson planning is detailed, taking into account the abilities of all students and identifying activities which will motivate them. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of students and provide work which builds effectively on previous learning. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and a great deal of work is completed. Teachers encourage students to discuss their thoughts and ideas and, because the class is small, all students contribute. They

listen carefully to their teachers and to other students. Teaching assistants provide very effective support as part of a wider group or when working with individuals.

Students rightly feel that they make good progress because of the very good support they receive. Most know how well they are achieving. They are encouraged to build on individual strengths and their talents are recognised. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given good support with the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics and other students are helped to build on their existing skills. The provision made for more able students is also good. Students are given opportunities to read out aloud in lessons and to extend their vocabulary and language skills. They set to work quickly, are very industrious and have pride in their work. All exercise books are in very good condition and handwriting and presentation are of a high standard. Students are given lots of positive feedback during lessons, which does a great deal to motivate them, but it does not always help them to improve their work further. Marking is developing. Students' work is marked but this is often only with a tick or brief comment. Students do not yet evaluate their own work. However, they do redraft their writing, improving the quality each time.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding. This is the foundation on which everything else is built. Students at the school have experienced significant disadvantage in their lives and this inevitably leads to behavioural and emotional difficulties. The school works hard to overcome negative attitudes and behaviour and helps students to value themselves. Students gain self-confidence and self-esteem because they are nurtured and very well supported. Because the school makes very good provision for personal and social development students learn to socialise with others, living and working as part of a community. They are encouraged to help people less fortunate than themselves. One student helps out at a local scout group working with disabled young people. It is evident that this has given her a much better understanding of the lives of people with disabilities and that she is using this new knowledge to very positive effect. The students raise money for charity. They produced cakes and 'fridge magnets' and sold them at a local shopping mall in order to raise money for Children in Need.

Moral education is outstanding. During their time in school students learn how to manage their own needs and develop a secure understanding of right and wrong. They are able to make choices and decisions and to reflect on their attitudes and actions. They appreciate the chance they have been given to put their lives back on track. Behaviour is good. Students are helped to improve their behaviour through clear guidelines and consistent boundaries. There are a good range of rewards and all students understand what is expected of them and are clear about what will happen should they choose not to conform. Staff are very good role models and the school goes out of its way to ensure that students understand the consequences of dangerous or unlawful behaviour. This message is reinforced by visits from members of the prison and fire services and visits to a local prison. Students recognise how

much they have developed during their time at the school. One student said that she had, 'become the person that she always wanted to be'.

Spiritual development is good. Each morning starts with a lesson during which students are encouraged to reflect on issues or ideas. They learn about Christian beliefs in religious education (RE) lessons and have visited religious buildings such as Beverley Minster and the local church. In one lesson seen during the inspection, students compared Native American songs of praise with Christian prayers. They made very perceptive comments. Students develop a good understanding of other world religions and of life in other countries through cross-curricular work in lessons. However, the school is aware that not all students have a secure understanding of the cultural diversity of English society. The school is attempting to compensate for this.

Students say that there is no bullying and that any disagreements which might occur are sorted out promptly. Although they say that it is hard to find friends with similar interests within such a small class group, they are aware that this slight disadvantage is balanced by the very good individual support they receive. Students are encouraged to make friends outside school so that they have access to a wider social group. Attendance is good because students enjoy school. Students participate in the school community and feel that all staff take their views into account. They are developing a good understanding of the local area and of environmental issues. They are encouraged to reflect on the beauty of the earth and on those things which might damage or destroy it. Students understand the difficulties faced by people in other communities. By the end of their time in school, they are well prepared for their future lives and able to take their place as useful members of society.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. Although the school has not written a safer recruitment policy, it has implemented all the latest guidance on safeguarding students and there are rigorous procedures to ensure that students are kept safe. Thorough risk assessments are carried out for all outdoor and educational visits and there are good procedures in place to keep students safe during the school day. However, the fire risk assessment is out of date and should be updated. Students are given very good advice on how to stay or become healthy and on how to stop dangerous habits which might put them at risk. They are given very effective personal support and this helps to raise their self-esteem and make them self-confident and aspirational. The school and house staff work very closely together and this ensures that the provision made for students' welfare is very good. These students are particularly vulnerable; during their time at this provision they begin to overcome previous difficulties and are helped to become responsible members of society. Students have very good relationships with all staff; one student said that she viewed them as her family. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has carried out the necessary safeguarding checks for all staff. It maintains a single central register of such checks, as required.

School's premises and accommodation

The accommodation is good. The school building is separate from the house. The classroom is bright and well maintained and is safe and suitable for effective learning. There are no specialist teaching rooms but an additional room can be used if required. The school grounds provide good play areas and opportunities for outdoor education and recreation.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Carers receive a good range of information. There are regular and informative written reports. There is very good liaison between the school and care staff and this leads to 'joined-up' working arrangements which do much to support the very good personal development of students. The prospectus is clear and informative. An evaluation of progress is included in students' reviews.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a clear, fair and well-written complaints procedure. There have been no complaints in recent years.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for students' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- Prepare a policy to comply with DCSF guidance, 'safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education 2007' (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- Maintain an up to date fire risk assessment in accordance with fire prevention (workplace) regulations 1997. (paragraph 3(5))

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following point for development:

- ensure that the feedback given to students, including marking, tells them how to improve their work.

School details

Name of school	Prospect School		
DCSF number	8116008		
Unique reference number	134849		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2004		
Age range of students	10-16		
Gender of students	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Number on roll (part-time students)	Boys: 0	Girls: 2	Total: 2
Number of students with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of students who are looked after	Boys: 2	Girls: 2	Total: 4
Annual fees (day students)	£26,679.00		
Address of school	West Lambwath Road Withernick Nr Hull East Yorkshire HU11 4TP		
Telephone number	01964 529218		
Fax number	01964 529218		
Email address	lyndaprospect56@hotmail.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Lynda Casey		
Proprietor	Mrs Lesley Morris		
Reporting inspector	Christine Graham HMI		
Childcare inspector	Ms Lynne Busby		
Dates of inspection	20 - 21 May 2008		