

Pegasus School

Independent Special School

Inspection report

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| DCSF Registration Number | 830/6024 |
| Unique Reference Number | 132120 |
| Inspection number | 329429 |
| Inspection dates | 18–19 November 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | David Rzeknik HMI |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

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

An inspection of the boarding provision was also carried out. The full report on this provision is not published but may be obtained from Ofsted by telephoning 08456 404040.

Information about the school

Pegasus School is an independent residential special school in Caldwell, Derbyshire. It opened in March 2000 and is owned by SENAD group, a private limited company. It provides day and boarding provision for boys and girls aged 8 to 19 years who have severe learning difficulties, complex speech and communication difficulties, including autism, and challenging behaviour. There are currently 22 boys on roll and no girls. Nearly all boys are White British and half are looked after. A third have been admitted in the past two years. All have statements of special educational needs and are referred and funded by a number of local authorities. Two boys are day pupils and the rest are boarders. A multi-disciplinary approach is adopted to meet pupils' needs. It means that a wide range of professionals work with teachers, particularly speech and language therapists, clinical psychologists, occupational therapists, paediatricians and a nurse. Residential provision was inspected by two social care inspectors at the same time as the school's educational provision. The previous inspection of educational provision was in February 2005 and of residential provision in December 2007.

The school aims to: *'meet pupils' needs by fulfilling our social inclusion policy, and by creating a social and learning environment that addresses behavioural difficulties through the development of core interactive skills, and maintain and develop targets by ongoing self-evaluation'.*

Evaluation of the school

Pegasus School provides a good standard of education. The overall quality of boarding is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school and are happy there. Teaching and the curriculum are good and enable pupils to make good progress in their personal development and basic skills. Work on developing pupils' communication, social skills and behaviour is particularly effective. This is because everyone knows what the needs of each individual are and ensures that these are met well. The multi-disciplinary approach is effective and the range of support successfully develops pupils' independence and self-esteem. Pupils are well cared for and relationships

between staff and pupils are very good. Most regulatory requirements are met. Employment checks on welfare supply staff are not robust enough. Parents, carers, and placing authorities hold the school's work in high regard. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and enables pupils to make good progress in their personal and academic development. The curriculum policy provides a clear rationale regarding what subjects will be taught and how. Provision is underpinned by appropriate plans and comprehensive schemes of work. The previous inspection identified a requirement to improve provision in religious education and citizenship. This has been effectively done, with both subjects making an important contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and this ensures there is appropriate breadth and balance. The flexibility of the curriculum is a key strength. This means that pupils have a learning programme tailored to their specific needs and targets. For example, if a pupil has severe sensory impairment, regular sessions in the light room and soft play areas are routinely organised along with support from therapists. Good use is made of therapists as well as music specialists to improve pupils' communication skills and behaviour. Key Stage 4 pupils study the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Transition Challenge course which further develops their life skills and prepares them well for leaving school. Post-16 pupils then go on to study other ASDAN modules. Mini-enterprise work, where pupils make assorted items to sell, helps develop their understanding of manufacturing and the meaning and value of money. A few pupils undertake work experience in a local stable, and some earn additional pocket money preparing meals for others and washing the school minibus. The leadership recognises there is a lack of 'real life' work experiences matched to pupils' specific needs. Pupils are very well prepared for leaving care with detailed transition plans in place. A wide range of trips and residential experiences broadens pupils' horizons and increases their enjoyment.

Teaching and assessment are good. A wide range of teaching styles are adopted. For example, staff use signing and visual aids to encourage effective communication. This said, teachers do not always model the structure of language and encourage more fluent pupils to regularly use correct forms when speaking. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and know pupils' individual needs well. They use assessment information effectively to ensure work is pitched at the right level and is relevant to the objectives in pupils' statements. Teachers are good at getting the balance right between reinforcing and consolidating previous learning, so that concepts are fully established, and extending skills. Life skills are taught effectively and this means that pupils can make choices and look after and advocate for themselves. Good use is made of digital photography for recording achievement. However, opportunities are missed for more widespread use of computers in education and welfare. The teachers' assessment of individual pupils' progress using

pre-National Curriculum levels (p-levels) is good. However, the analysis of performance data is not yet sharp enough.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The supportive environment and positive ethos successfully develop pupils' independence, self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils enjoy school as demonstrated by their good attendance. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and much improved from that seen at the time of admission. When challenging behaviour occurs it is dealt with effectively by education and welfare staff. Pupils know right from wrong and have formed good relationships with staff and each other. Pupils understand the consequences of their actions and its impact on those around them. This is a major achievement given that most pupils have real difficulty interacting socially and emotionally with others. The school has improved provision for cultural development. 'Respect for All' work, learning Spanish and studying world religions have ensured that pupils have an awareness and respect for cultural diversity. Pupils with a faith are actively encouraged to visit local places of worship. Regular educational visits and residential trips provide pupils with a secure understanding of public institutions and services in the wider community. Pupils are making a positive contribution by involving themselves in the decisions made about their welfare and education. For example, at house meetings pupils have indicated how to improve menus. They also prepare meals for others and have raised money for charity.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Overall provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. While pupils are well cared for and provision is encouraging them to adopt a healthy lifestyle, the provision for the safety of pupils is only adequate. This is because the leadership has not been robust enough in ensuring all of the required employment checks have been carried out on welfare supply staff, although Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks have been seen and recorded for these staff.

High priority is given to behaviour management. Staff act quickly and effectively intervene when boys occasionally lose control. Detailed recording of serious incidents and use of physical restraint enables the leadership to closely monitor the behaviour of individuals. High staffing levels ensure pupils are effectively supervised at all times. A nurse and qualified first aiders ensure their health and medical needs are managed effectively. The system for the administration of medicines is robust. Risk assessments for the premises, off-site visits and classroom activities are of good quality and effectively implemented. The school promotes a healthy lifestyle through physical education lessons and food technology work. Each pupil has a detailed health plan which records how their specific health needs will be met. The requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 are met. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when the school lacked an accessibility plan.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All staff, including supply staff, have been subject to a check by the CRB to confirm their suitability to work with children. All of the necessary employment checks have been carried out on education and welfare staff employed by Pegasus. Leaders have not been robust in ensuring all of the required employment checks, in addition to CRB checks, have been made before welfare supply start work. Written confirmation that the required employment checks have been done is not received from supply agencies. The single central register details the checks made on the proprietorial body and on regular Pegasus staff but, apart from CRB checks, not on supply staff.

School's premises and accommodation

The school and boarding accommodation are housed in a Grade II listed building set in extensive grounds. The premises enable effective learning and welfare. Classrooms and bedrooms are of an adequate size and specialist light and soft play areas are of good quality. Teaching and boarding facilities are well maintained, clean and tidy. Bedrooms are decorated and furnished to a good standard and have been suitably adapted to cater for pupils' specific needs and/or disability. They contain televisions and pupils' personal possessions so that they are homely. At the time of the inspection the kitchen and dining facilities were being upgraded. The new parents' room and food technology areas are of good quality and well used. The clinic provides appropriate facilities for those who are ill.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Provision of information in the school prospectus has improved since the last inspection. It now contains all of the necessary details for parents, carers and others. However, one required piece of information is not sent to local authorities. When a pupil is admitted the headteacher agrees with the local authority the fees to be paid for welfare and education. Nevertheless, the school does not submit an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred in respect of pupils funded by local authorities. This regulation was not met when the school was last inspected. Annual reviews of pupils' statement of special educational needs are carried out appropriately and outcomes are reported to local authorities, parents and carers. Parents and carers receive two comprehensive reports a year about their child's attainment, progress and future targets.

Procedures for handling complaints

The complaints procedure meets regulatory requirements.

The residential provision was judged to be satisfactory, and National Minimum Standards were not all met. A full report on this provision is available on application to Ofsted.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- ensure that prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all supply staff appropriate checks have been carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references and that such information is taken into account before appointment is confirmed (paragraph 4(2)(a))
- ensure that before supply staff begin work the proprietor and headteacher have received written confirmation that checks have been carried out to confirm their identity, right to work in the United Kingdom and qualifications (paragraph 4A (1-8))
- ensure that the single central register of checks on staff records for all supply staff whether written notification has been received from the supply agency that all of the required employment checks have been carried out, together with dates when they were completed or certificates obtained (paragraph 4C(4 and 5)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- submit to placing authorities an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of pupils funded by those local authorities (paragraph 6(7)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- improve the range and quality of work experience
- improve the tracking and analysis of pupils' progress.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

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|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| outstanding | good | satisfactory | inadequate |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|

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 | | | ✓ | |
|--|--|--|---|--|

School details

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|---|--------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Name of school | Pegasus School | | |
| DCSF number | 830/6024 | | |
| Unique reference number | 132120 | | |
| Type of school | Residential special school | | |
| Status | Independent | | |
| Date school opened | March 2000 | | |
| Age range of pupils | 8–19 | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | | |
| Number on roll | Boys: 22 | Girls: 0 | Total: 22 |
| Number of boarders | Boys: 20 | Girls: 0 | Total: 20 |
| Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need | Boys: 22 | Girls: 0 | Total: 21 |
| Number of pupils who are looked after | Boys: 12 | Girls: 0 | Total: 12 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £ 72,000 | | |
| Annual fees (boarders) | £ 217,000 | | |
| Telephone number | 01283761 352 | | |
| Fax number | 01283761 312 | | |
| Email address | hughrodger@pegasusschooluk.com | | |
| Headteacher | Mr Hugh Rodger | | |
| Proprietor | SENAD group | | |
| Reporting inspector | David Rzeznik HMI | | |
| Dates of inspection | 18–19 November 2008 | | |