

# Kisimul School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Peter McKenzie

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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**

Kisimul School was opened in 1977 and occupies two sites in Lincolnshire. The main school in Swinderby caters mainly for students between 8 and 16 years old. It also has a few students who are over 16 years old. Most post-16 students are educated at Acacia Hall, 20 miles away in Friesthorpe. There are 61 students on roll, 37 of whom are post-16 students. The school provides residential provision at both sites, which is reported on separately. All the students have a statement of special educational needs. They have severe learning difficulties, challenging behaviour and a very low level of attainment compared with age-related expectations. The majority also have an autism spectrum disorder. The school's aims are to offer students opportunities to interact, communicate and participate in everyday life as fully as possible through the integration of school, home and leisure activities and involvement in the wider community. The school's last educational inspection took place in May 2009.

## **Evaluation of the school**

Kisimul School provides its students with an outstanding quality of education and fully meets its aims. Students' progress is outstanding because of outstanding teaching and an outstanding curriculum, which fully meet students' individual needs. The outstanding provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the strong ethos of 24-hour learning help them to develop as individuals and to make exceptional improvement in their behaviour which is now outstanding. The school's safeguarding arrangements fully meet regulatory requirements. Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The school meets all the regulations.

## **Quality of education**

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. Students make outstanding progress because a curriculum, based on an overall policy supported by schemes of work and lesson planning, provides for each individual according to need, and covers all of the areas of learning required by the regulations. All subject planning is cross-referenced with National Curriculum attainment targets in basic subjects. The school's 14-19 curriculum enables students to be successful in Foundation Learning qualifications. Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) courses are followed by all students and develop life skills and social behaviours to prepare them for increased independence. The school has a strong commitment to 24-hour learning facilitated by excellent communication between the school and its homes. The curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) develops self-

confidence, promotes social interaction and creates opportunities to experience being part of the wider community. Shopping trips develop students' self-confidence. Students practise healthy living through widespread opportunities for physical activity in the school's outstanding facilities and further afield in outdoor activities and expeditions for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. They learn to cook in school and take the skills to their homes where they prepare food for others. Careers education includes work-related learning and familiarising students with the roles of people in the world of work. Communication skills are at the heart of every lesson and are delivered as individual support to meet a wide range of needs. The school's Holistic Approaches to Neuro Development and Learning Efficiency (HANDLE) prepares students for learning through therapies and developmental programmes to meet their needs. This is fully integrated into pupils' daily programmes. Students can also develop skills in animal husbandry and horticulture. There is a rich and varied programme of extra-curricular activity including sporting and outdoor activities, music and drama, and attending local youth organisations. There is a good range of physical activities in the converted barn at Acacia and the Sports Hall at Swinderby which are used extensively in the evening for leisure activities as part of the 24 hour curriculum. Some students go horse riding nearby.

Teaching and assessment are outstanding. Teachers respond successfully to the learning needs of a group of students with low prior attainment who have previously had periods of time out of school, so that they make outstanding progress. Teachers and the excellent teaching assistants display a caring and teaching commitment of a very high quality. Most teaching and learning is successful because it is based on outstanding one-to-one relationships with students. Specialist staff in sign language and speech therapy lead some lessons and create a highly positive learning experience. Teaching is based on the needs of students who often begin with poor skills in retaining knowledge, and ensures that key learning points are regularly practised and repeated. Teachers plan effectively with the use of students' attainment data and targets. In the great majority of lessons, teachers create active learning opportunities where adults work with students to develop themes according to the needs of each individual. In a very small minority of lessons, teachers talk for too long to the whole class and fail to recognise these individual needs. This can easily lead to students becoming restless and losing concentration. Assessment is a significant strength of the school. Detailed progress data are available for all students, contributing to target setting, reviews for Individual Education Plans (IEP), and reviews for pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Students also contribute their own comments to these reviews. Performance information is used successfully to plan lessons and report to parents. Students are regularly assessed from a baseline on entry by National Curriculum Levels and P Levels, using the school's own systems combined with a commercial package. The data provide the school with robust evidence of students' performance.

Students' progress is outstanding. Whilst overall attainment remains low, students in the most recent final year of compulsory schooling, who arrived in school with very low standards, made progress in basic subjects at above average levels and the large majority achieved well above expectations. A sample of students currently in school

shows similar high levels of progress as did students observed in lessons, and in work which was seen. This outstanding progress is supported by the good handover processes and the strong connections between home and school. Students say that they are very happy in school, they feel safe and enjoy active participation in learning.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students' behaviour is outstanding because they all make exceptional progress due to the support of experienced, dedicated, expert adults in school and care, who build one-to-one relationships with the individuals. Many students arrive from other schools which have not met their specific needs. They have often had periods out of school, or periods in school where their needs were not met. These students had little understanding of themselves or their own behaviour and its impact on others. The PSHE curriculum successfully teaches them to recognise themselves, firstly at a simple level, progressing to increased self-confidence and self-belief. The psychology team regularly reviews aspects of students' personal behaviour and communication through the partnership between care and education. Targets are recorded and reviewed and can contribute to wider review and accreditation. Students who joined the school with a lack of self-respect, often aggressive and unpredictable, have become valuable members of the school, undertaking key responsibilities and making an important contribution to the school. The school is a multi-cultural community and students from all cultures work harmoniously together. Within the curriculum, the school emphasises and celebrates cultural and religious difference. Students celebrate festivals and prepare and eat food from other cultures.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The seamless experience of residential care and education, generated by the staff who work with students in both settings, ensures students' outstanding personal and educational progress. Safeguarding policy and procedures are fully in place and are implemented effectively. Comprehensive policy and robust risk assessment ensure the safety of all students in school and on a range of regular and one-off educational visits. Risk assessment is in place for all activities and for all students. Staying safe is a key component of the PSHE course. Students are given a 'pupil voice' opportunity to express concern and anxiety. Supervision is effective in school, and in homes where students have lunch and may spend breaks. A staffing ratio of 1:1 is consistently in place. The school helps students to be healthy through a healthy diet and plenty of opportunities for exercise. The school has effective anti-bullying policy and procedures, including notice boards which display reporting procedures in pictures and symbols. The school has outstanding fire safety procedures: appliances are fully maintained; evacuations are regularly and thoroughly carried out and fire risk assessment is fully in place. There is a robust policy on first aid and many staff hold

current first aid qualifications. Admission and attendance registers fully meet requirements.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

Procedures are fully in place to verify the suitability of proprietors, staff and others to work with students. The school does not employ staff from employment agencies or use contracted staff. The single central register of checks on staff suitability fully meets requirements.

### **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The premises on both school sites provide a safe, outstanding learning environment and the school continues to develop its facilities to a very high standard. The development of a curriculum trail at Swinderby with a sensory garden and outdoor classroom, the installation of new outdoor equipment at Acacia, the rebuilding of the adventure play area at Swinderby and the sports barn at Acacia are all recent developments. Classrooms are large and well-equipped and adequate for the full range of activities. Students who are ill will be able to return to their own bedroom; the homes have additional rooms should any day student fall ill.

### **Provision of information**

The provision of information for parents, carers and others fully meets the regulations. All requisite information and policies are available on both the school's website and in the brochure. The school returns an annual account of income and expenditure to the placing authorities. Progress reports are provided to parents and carers in the form of a termly IEP review.

### **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school's policy for dealing with complaints fully meets the regulations.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets all The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

### **What the school could do to improve further**

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

- Ensure that all teaching meets the best standards seen, by continuing to implement the school's programme of support and development for teachers.

## 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

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special: severe learning difficulties		
<b>Date school opened</b>	1977		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8–19 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 51	Girls: 10	Total: 61
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 51	Girls: 10	Total: 61
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 50	Girls: 10	Total: 60
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£89,138		
<b>Address of school</b>	The Old Vicarage 61 High Street Swinderby Lincoln LN6 9LU		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01522 868279		
<b>Email address</b>	danny.carter@kisimul.co.uk margaret.hill@kisimul.co.uk		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Danny Carter		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Kisimul Group Ltd		



**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.**



29 November 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of Kisimul School, Lincoln, LN6 9LU**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We believe that you are fortunate to attend such an outstanding school. Your teachers and other adults have helped you to make outstanding progress in your work and in your personal lives. Thank you for letting us see your work and share some of your lessons with you. I still remember some of the signing I learnt!

You take part in so many activities to keep you healthy. We know you enjoy cooking and that you take part in many sporting activities in your excellent sports halls and swimming pool. Some of you have been on expeditions towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. You are learning to live and work together with other people and we know that the school gives you the chance to give your opinions on the school itself and your own progress.

I have asked the school to make some of the teaching even better, so that you are always working at the highest possible level, and making the best possible progress.

We wish you continuing success at school and in the next stage of your lives.

Yours sincerely

Peter McKenzie  
Lead inspector