

# Applegate School

Independent school inspection report

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DCSF registration number	888/6090
Unique Reference Number (URN)	130242
URN for registered childcare and social care	SC062503
Inspection number	344438
Inspection dates	3-4 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Christine Graham HMI
Social care inspector	Graham Robinson

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A<sup>1</sup> of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005<sup>2</sup>, 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 care provision was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 having regard to the national minimum standards for children's homes. This inspection took place at the same time but the full report is published separately on Ofsted's website and should be read in conjunction with this report which covers the educational registration of the school.

## Information about the school

Applegate School is an independent special school. It is part of the Northern Care group. The school opened in 2005. It is located in Colne Lancashire. The school is located on the top floor of a children's home. The school caters for six students between the ages of 11 to 16 years. It admits boys from four local authorities in the North West. There are four boys currently registered at the school. Two attend full time and two attend part time. The boys also attend training courses and work based learning placements. All students have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) and other associated special educational needs and/or disabilities. Three students have a statement of special educational needs and all four students are in the care of a local authority. The school aims to:

'provide a high quality education in a supportive and achieving environment for young people not able to attend a mainstream school. It aims to foster the development of young people by meeting their individual needs and giving them the confidence and self-belief to lead purposeful, productive and enjoyable lives'.

The school was last inspected in May 2007. The last inspection of boarding was in June 2009.

## Evaluation of the school

The school has successfully tackled all the recommendations from the last inspection. It provides a good education for its students. The overall quality of education is good. The curriculum, teaching and assessment and welfare, health and safety are good. The provision made for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school effectively safeguards the welfare of all its

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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)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

students and has produced all the relevant policies and guidelines. The school meets all the regulations necessary for its continued registration as an independent school.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is good. Younger students follow a curriculum based on the National Curriculum. There are good opportunities for students to access specialist teaching, particularly in music and drama. The school tries to reintegrate younger or more able students into mainstream schools, where possible, so that they can access the full range of GCSE courses. Students in Key Stage 4 are offered a number of curriculum pathways. The choice of course is closely matched to students' career planning and they are encouraged to develop skills which will support them in their future lives. Students develop practical skills but they also follow courses in literacy and numeracy.

Teaching and assessment are good. Students make good progress because teachers plan their learning very carefully. Students are assessed on entry to the school. These initial assessments provide useful information about students' attainment in reading, spelling and mathematics. The school also assesses students' interests and helps them to identify their future career plans. The information provided is used to set targets and becomes part of their individual education plan (IEP). Each student has a National Curriculum record of achievement. The records provide benchmarking information and allow staff to assess students' attainment and progress in the core subjects of English, mathematic, science and information communication technology (ICT). These records show that students make steady progress in the core subjects. Students take Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) awards in a number of units including literacy and numeracy. They leave with a range of awards and certificates which include sports leader awards and health and safety certificates. These support their planned career choices. All students that leave the school at 16 go onto education, employment or training. The school and external providers prepare students well for these changes and ensure that they have the qualifications needed for acceptance to college or further training. Students that intend to leave the area at a later date are placed on short-term courses that allow them to make the most of the transition period.

Students develop positive attitudes to learning because teachers know them well. There are only two students in school for much of the week and they are taught in separate classes. This allows the school to match the content of lessons to their age and needs. It also ensures that students are not affected by the behaviour of others or the desire to impress their peers. As a result, students have positive attitudes to learning. They take pride in their work. Teachers manage any challenging behaviour that does occur very effectively and they ensure that students focus on their work for much of the time. The pace of learning is brisk and teachers provide a variety of short activities and tasks that interest students. They are encouraged to offer their opinions and ideas. This provides opportunities for teachers to assess their understanding and to correct any misconceptions or negative thinking. Students on

external courses and placements make good progress because courses are very well matched to their needs and interests.

Teachers benefit from effective professional development. Northern Care provides training for all staff. An education manager monitors the work of the school and provides effective guidance. She observes lessons and helps the school to plan further improvement.

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Their moral and social development is good. Students are given very effective guidance and support. They have good relationships with staff and develop a range of social skills. The school sets clear boundaries and any unacceptable language or behaviour is challenged. Students are usually polite to each other and they will praise the actions or work of their peers. They make a positive contribution to the school and local community. They have been involved with Colne in Bloom and take part in other community events. They raise money for charity. Students take financial management and life skills courses and have practical experience of managing money. They are very well prepared for their future economic well-being. Work in school is well supported by activities in the evenings and at weekends. Students' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Measures to promote this in school are satisfactory but the range of visits and visitors is limited. As a result, although students have an adequate understanding of their own and other cultures they have to little first hand experience of the diversity of society. Students' behaviour is satisfactory. Students' attendance has improved. Care staff promote students' attendance well and if punctuality or attendance is an issue they implement a range of strategies that can include earlier bedtimes.

### Welfare, health and safety of the students

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. Education and care staff work together very effectively. There are regular, planned meetings to exchange information and a number of informal conversations throughout the school day. All staff support students when they are preparing for review meetings and this ensures that students' views are taken into account and that any difficulties are sorted out. The school has implemented the latest guidance on safeguarding students and there are effective procedures to ensure that they are kept safe. The school carries out detailed risk assessments for all activities and each student has an individual risk assessment. Students are given support and advice that helps them to understand potential health risks. They are encouraged to make healthy food choices and take exercise. Their emotional needs are identified and they are provided with a great deal of one-to-one support and attention. During students' early days in school lessons are carefully structured to allow students to experience a great deal of success. This helps to raise their self-esteem and gives them the confidence to make the most of their education. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act.

## 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 school is situated at the top of the house. It is attractively decorated and bright. Classrooms are small but large enough to accommodate the number of students in the school. One classroom has a sink and it is also used for art and practical activities. There is an ICT room with two relatively new computers and an office which is also used for storing some resources. Classrooms are well organised and there are a number of new textbooks and resources which are easily accessible to students. The school can use communal rooms in the main house.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents and carers receive a range of information. There are regular review meetings and short-term and annual reports. The prospectus is clear and informative.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has clear, fair and well-written complaints procedures for parents and/or carers and for students. There have been no formal complaints in the last two years.

## Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The care provision was judged to be outstanding and national minimum standards were met. A full report on the care provision is available on Ofsted's website and should be viewed in conjunction with this report.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations').

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- Provide opportunities for students to visit places of spiritual or cultural significance and meet people from different backgrounds and cultures.

Inspection judgement recording form

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 students		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of students' needs		√		
How well students make progress in their learning		√		

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development			√	
The behaviour of students			√	

Welfare, health and safety of students

The overall welfare, health and safety of students		√		
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The quality of boarding provision

Evaluation of boarding provision	√			
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## School details

Name of school	Applegate School		
DCSF number	888/6090		
Unique reference number (URN)	130242		
Type of school	Independent special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	August 2005		
Age range of students	11-16		
Gender of students	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Number on roll (part-time students)	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Number of boarders	Boys: 4	Girls: 0	Total: 4
Number of students with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
Number of students who are looked after	Boys: 4	Girls: 0	Total: 4
Annual fees (day students)	£51,230.00		
Telephone number	01282 867 289		
Fax number	01282 870 472		
Email address	Applegate.education@northern-care.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Berry		
Proprietor	Whistledawn Limited		
Reporting inspector	Christine Graham HMI		
Dates of inspection	3-4 February 2010		