

Camphill School, Glencraig, Holywood,
County Down

DE Ref No IS41

Report of a Re-registration Inspection Visit in
December 2022



Providing Inspection services for:
Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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Context

Camphill School is situated in the grounds of the Camphill Community, Glenraig, on the outskirts of Holywood in County Down. The school is administered by the trustees of the management council of the wider Camphill Community. Most of the school's funding comes from the Education Authority (EA). For a small number of pupils, the placement is funded by the relevant health and social care trust. Other sources of funding include fundraising by Camphill Community, legacies and donations. The school has been providing education in this area for 68 years and its aims are articulated in its motto, "enabling potential, building capacity".

Due to pupil placements in the school being dependent on the needs of individual pupils, as identified by the EA, the catchment area varies from year to year. While most pupils come from the North Down and wider Belfast areas, pupils come from as far away as Coleraine and Downpatrick. While most of those enrolled attend the school as 'day pupils', a minority reside in Camphill Community. There is currently one pupil in key stage 2; the others are all of post-primary age. Arrangements for grouping the pupils for lessons are flexible: where the pupils are able to interact well with their peers, they are placed together in a small class; other pupils receive one-to-one or two-to-one individual support as required. All of the pupils in the school have statements of special educational need. There are no newcomer pupils at the school.

| Camphill School Glenraig | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Enrolment | 12 | 11 | 15 | 13 |
| No. of pupils of primary school age | 0 | * | * | * |
| No. of pupils of post-primary school age | 12 | 10 | 14 | 12 |
| % Attendance for pupils of primary school age | N/A | N/A | 98 | 100 |
| % Attendance for pupils of post-primary school age | 80 | 87 | 82 | 96 |
| FSME Percentage** | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| No. of pupils on the register of special educational needs | 12 | 11 | 15 | 13 |
| No. of pupils with a statement of educational need | 12 | 11 | 15 | 13 |

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

** The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils with free school meals entitlement.

Focus of the Re-registration Inspection Visit

During the re-registration inspection visit, the inspectors focused on the extent to which the:

- school provides efficient and suitable instruction (referred to in this report as 'provision') that is matched to the age, gender and ability of the pupils;
- arrangements for child protection and safeguarding (including the vetting arrangements for staff) are appropriate, in place and being implemented;

- accommodation is suitable for a school and is appropriate for the age, gender and numbers of pupils attending the school;
- equipment and resources are sufficient, safe and appropriate, including those related to fire safety; and
- pupils get access to education on a full-time basis, with reference to pupil attendance.

It should be noted that independent schools are not obliged to follow the Northern Ireland Curriculum and may employ teachers who do not hold teaching qualifications recognised by the Department of Education. Further details of the nature of the curriculum offered and the teaching qualifications held by the staff are included in this report. Inspectors observed teaching and learning, scrutinised documentation and the pupils' written work and held discussions with the pupils while they were in their lessons, and with the teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

Outcomes for learners

A significant proportion of pupils have medical, emotional or behavioural needs, which can hinder their readiness to learn. These barriers to learning are well understood by the staff who support the pupils well to re-engage them in the learning activities. A small number of pupils at risk of disengaging from their lessons are developing a range of effective strategies to manage their own behaviour: almost all have increased their capability to begin to engage in small group sessions in the classroom.

The pupils make effective progress towards meeting their individual educational targets; they enjoy their learning activities and stay on task for appropriate periods of time. The work in their books is well presented: the appropriately differentiated tasks enable them to achieve and make progress at their own level, notably in literacy and numeracy. Most of the pupils attain a range of unit awards from accredited courses across a range of curricular areas.

The pupils' wider skills, particularly their ability to work and communicate with peers and staff, are being developed well through purposeful engagement in practical activities with others. In discussions with inspectors, most of the pupils expressed their views clearly and engaged confidently with adult visitors. Individual pupils who experience difficulties in communication use an appropriate range of strategies to communicate their needs and learning preferences.

Provision for learning

The school provides efficient and suitable instruction which meets the needs of all of the pupils.

The school has a complement of three teachers and a head of education. All hold third level qualifications, two of whom hold qualified teacher status. There are three additional assistant teachers and, currently, 17 learning support assistants. All staff benefit from ongoing professional learning and have undertaken recent in-house training in, for example, the application of positive behaviour support strategies.

The school follows largely the Waldorf curriculum, blended with the requirements of the [Northern Ireland Curriculum](#). The curriculum also takes account of the Council for Examinations and Assessment's "Prerequisite ('Q') Skills Framework" for assessing learners, taking account of age, cognitive ability, learning difficulties and other significant complex needs. At the core of this approach, there are daily morning lessons taught in themed learning blocks over a six-week period. The curriculum content is balanced effectively with practical, creative and therapeutic learning activities, which prioritise the pupils' health, wellbeing and functional life skills. The flexible individualised learning programmes and teaching strategies enable the staff to meet the pupils' complex needs and respond knowledgeably and perceptively to their barriers to learning.

The recently reviewed personal learning plans (PLPs) outline longer-term priorities covering all areas of learning; they are informed well by allied health therapy assessments and behaviour support plans. The school is reviewing the PLPs with a view to providing more focused, measurable short-term targets. The teachers keep daily individual pupil logs which map closely the engagement levels for every pupil, the completion of their learning targets and the challenges they experience. The medium- and long-term planning for all areas of learning is practical and flexible, allowing for the pupils to consolidate their learning or progress to a new stage, as and when appropriate.

The lessons observed were all very effective in meeting pupils' individual needs and were characterised by nurturing working relationships. The positive learning environments enable the pupils to engage at varying levels in individual activities, which are well matched to their needs and their interests. Skilful and sensitive staff support empowers the pupils to play a more active role in learning activities and the staff work intuitively in recognising and increasing the pupils' readiness to learn.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection visit, there are appropriate arrangements for child protection and safeguarding of pupils in place. The school's child protection policy sets out clearly and is guided by the EA's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures. Associated policies relating to positive behaviour support, for example, are appropriate and updated regularly. The designated teachers and designated trustee access the EA's safeguarding training: all relevant training is up to date. Refresher training for all staff is provided annually. Evidence was provided by the school that Access NI vetting has been carried out for all members of staff. In discussions in class with the pupils, they reported that they feel safe in the school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

Accommodation, equipment and resources, including health and safety

The accommodation is suitable for a school and is appropriate for the age, gender and numbers of pupils attending. The range of resources available meets the learning, communication and sensory needs of the pupils: additionally, the staff maximise the use of the extensive outdoor learning and play areas. The health and safety of the pupils and security of the site are given a high priority and appropriate arrangements are put in place to ensure the site is safe and secure.

Summary of Key Findings

- Camphill School Glenraig provides efficient and suitable instruction that is matched to the age, gender and ability of the pupils (Education and Libraries Order (NI) 1986 Part IV 39 (1) c).
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection visit, there are appropriate arrangements for child protection and safeguarding of pupils in place.
- The accommodation is suitable for a school and is appropriate for the age, gender and numbers of pupils attending the school.
- The equipment and resources are sufficient, safe and appropriate, including those related to fire safety.

Conclusion

On receipt of this report, and considering all other evidence available, the Department of Education has concluded that the school will continue to be registered to provide education.

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