

Education and Youth Services Ltd (4)

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	825/6040
Unique Reference Number	135604
Inspection number	333801
Inspection dates	12 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Judith Charlesworth

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.

Information about the school

The High Wycombe Education and Youth Services (4) school (EYS) is an Independent day school which provides for 16 students aged 14-16. This group of students follows a course known as 'Restart'. The school is one of several owned by the Education and Youth Services group. It opened in September 2007 and this is its first inspection since it was registered in February 2008. The school is situated in a rented, converted industrial building on an industrial estate in High Wycombe. Fifteen places at the EYS are purchased annually by Buckinghamshire local authority for students who have been excluded, or are at risk of exclusion from mainstream and local special schools. The students all have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and almost all have a statement of special educational needs. The school shares its accommodation with students aged 16 years and over who are following an Entry to Employment (e2e) course for young adults who are not in education, employment or training. This provision is also run by EYS.

The EYS aims 'to empower young people whatever their ability, and to maximise potential through learning, leading, challenging and inclusion'.

Evaluation of the school

The High Wycombe EYS school provides a satisfactory quality of education and makes good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their welfare, health and safety. As a result, they make satisfactory academic progress and good progress in their personal development. By the time students leave school they are well prepared for work or continuing their education and for making a more positive contribution to the community. The school has effectively addressed most of the findings of its registration inspection and now meets nearly all of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The quality of education is satisfactory.

The curriculum is satisfactory and adequately supports students' progress. It covers all the required areas of learning and appropriately emphasises accreditation, vocational education and preparation for adult life. The school uses its good partnerships with external agencies such as Connexions, colleges and specialist providers to enhance and supplement the curriculum. It strongly promotes the key skills of literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). This supports students' opportunities for further education and future economic well-being. The curriculum is supported by subject plans and schemes of work in all subjects. Some of these, for example in English, are of good quality and closely followed in lessons. However, occasionally, others such as in science are not followed according to plan. This inhibits students' progress in these subjects. Classroom resources are adequate although the use of information and communication technology for teaching is limited. The lack of specialist facilities limits practical activities and accreditation in some subjects, for example in the scientific and technological areas.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Teaching is underpinned by good relationships and clearly helps students develop better attitudes to education and to each other. Students' behaviour is good and any minor incidents are immediately and effectively addressed. The teachers' subject knowledge is adequate and time is used well so that students work hard in all lessons. However, at times, there is insufficient discussion and practical work and too much emphasis on written questions and answers. This limits opportunities for on-going assessment to support learning further. At other times, discussion does not sufficiently reinforce the main learning objectives of the lesson. Lesson planning is inconsistent. Some planning is so detailed – down to the minute – that it gives no room for manoeuvre, while other lesson planning is scant and has insufficient focus on what will be learned. The staff know each student very well which generally enables them to plan work that matches their needs and interests. However, this is often not evident in lesson plans.

The school does not have a framework for assessing progress. Students' work is marked, with a suitable emphasis given to reviewing work with individuals rather than writing comments on the paper. However, target setting in lesson plans and on students' personal learning plans is often inadequate as there is some confusion about terminology such as 'aims', 'objectives' and 'learning outcomes'. Students' statements are taken into consideration when constructing individual learning plans, but a systematic approach to this has not been developed. The school does not have a system for tracking students' attainment and progress over time which hinders its ability to set suitable targets for individuals.

Nevertheless, the educational provision enables students to make satisfactory progress. Their attitudes to learning improve and they strive to do well as they become motivated by their own success and recognise the benefits of education and learning to their future lives.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

This aspect of provision is good. Students' personal development is well supported by the curriculum, the staff and external organisations. The students enjoy school and most attend more regularly than they did at their previous schools. Their attitudes to school and work are good, and their behaviour is good and occasionally outstanding in lessons due to good behaviour management systems. Students become more confident and their self-esteem improves as they are listened to and come to feel valued. For example, they are prepared to outline their own strengths and weaknesses to the class in PSHE lessons and learn to recognise the value of education and qualifications as a key to future success. This prepares students well for their future lives.

The students' moral and social development is good. They put forward ideas about improvements to support the school community. They also contribute to the wider community, for example, by helping out at a local senior citizens' residence. Curriculum studies include topical matters which help them to consider social and moral issues such as smacking and the 'yob' culture. The curriculum supports students' understanding of public institutions and services. The school reinforces the difference between right and wrong and there is a clear behaviour code that students largely adhere to. Bullying and racism are not accepted, and students' rights and responsibilities, in and out of the centre, are often explored. Relationships between students are largely positive and they mix well with the older e2e students. The students usually work well in pairs or when contributing to whole class discussions or sports activities.

Cultural development is relatively under-emphasised. The curriculum includes consideration of religion and associated issues such as prejudice and cultural tolerance, and aspects of the arts such as poetry and modern art. However, planning for cultural development is less effective than for other aspects of students' personal development.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school's provision for safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of students is good. Supporting students' personal development is important to the school and this underpins the provision. The curriculum has a strong focus on helping students to make safe and healthy choices. Helping students to safeguard themselves is an explicit feature of the PSHCE programme.

The school makes good use of external organisations such as Street Dreams to provide aspects of PSHCE, for example sessions on drugs awareness and street

crime. Healthy, wholesome lunchtime food is cooked every day and several opportunities for physical activity, that the students enjoy, are provided each week.

Health and safety is addressed well. Staff training, for example on child protection, and positive handling is up to date. The required policies and practices are generally clear and effectively implemented. There is, however, some ambiguity in documentation about smoking, which is allowed in designated outside areas although the school declares itself a no-smoking zone. Suitable records of incidents and accidents are made, but are not always easy to track, review and link with sanctions, due to the way they are stored. Attendance registers are properly maintained although attendance data is not yet effectively analysed so that the school can set targets for improvement. Fire risks are addressed well and suitable risk assessments are made of all activities and venues that students attend. New students have a health and safety induction when they first join the school. The staff support individuals' well-being effectively. They are always available to talk to students who turn to them in need, and link them with various external agencies and organisations for additional support. Bullying and anything that makes students feel uncomfortable, is not accepted and is immediately addressed. As a result, students are largely respectful of one another, staff and visitors. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All staff have had an enhanced check with the Criminal Records Bureau to ensure that they are suitable to work with young people. A range of other checks are carried out prior to any staff appointment, although robust checks on medical fitness have not so far been included. This omission is currently being addressed. Staff checks are kept in an appropriate single register as required.

School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises and accommodation are of adequate quality and enable students to learn effectively and safely. The proprietors continually refurbish the building. In the past few months additional toilet facilities and a common room have been constructed. Hot water has now been provided in all toilets and suitable facilities have been set aside for any student who is ill. These represent improvements since the initial inspection at the school's registration. However, some of the carpet is rucked and hazardous, and it is very stained in the entrance hall. Classrooms are spacious and in good decorative order, but the school has few specialist curriculum facilities other than a small kitchen and an information and communication technology suite. There are no grounds attached to the building, but lessons, for example, in science, are occasionally held in the local park. The school has made good arrangements for students to use a local leisure centre for physical activities.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents and carers, local authorities and other interested people are clear and up to date. When students first join the EYS, parents and carers receive an extensive information pack which includes the prospectus, permission forms and some policy documents. The prospectus includes a suitable list of documents and other information that are available on request. It is currently being revised and reprinted in a clearer, loose-leaf format that can be easily updated. Information is also provided on the EYS website. Restart students do not yet have their own induction pack. Annual reports on students' progress in each subject are produced. However, the comments on progress and targets are not always sufficiently focused on academic learning.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints meets requirements.

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 the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- establish a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from such assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

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

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, ensure that appropriate checks been carried out to confirm their medical fitness and take this information into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(2)(a)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide suitable flooring and keep it in good condition (paragraph 5(s))

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 staff's understanding of assessment for learning in lessons, and of clear, sharp target setting to support individuals' progress.
- Improve provision for cultural development.
- Improve the content of reports on students' progress in subjects of the curriculum.

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 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

Name of school	Education and Youth Services Ltd (4)		
DCSF number	825/6040		
Unique reference number	135604		
Type of school	Independent special school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 2007		
Age range of pupils	14-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 14	Girls: 1	Total: 15
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 14	Girls: 1	Total: 15
Annual fees (day pupils)	£16,500		
Address of school	Unit 3 Spearmast Industrial Estate Lane End Road High Wycombe Bucks HP12 4JG		
Telephone number	01494 525712		
Fax number	01494 525719		
Email address	k.brooke@eys.org.uk; r.atkinson@eys.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Kelly Brooke		
Proprietor	Mr Richard Atkinson - Education & Youth Services Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Judith Charlesworth		
Date of inspection	12 June 2009		