

On Track Education Centre Westbury

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Jonathan Palk HMI

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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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

On Track Education Centre Westbury is a small day special school in Wiltshire which opened in April 2009. It is registered to take up to 24 students, aged 11 to 18 years, and currently has seven boys and girls on roll. Most students have a statement of special educational needs. All students have experienced difficulties in their previous school settings and have had disrupted educational experiences. The current students are on part time placements. Their programmes are monitored by various agencies including schools, Wiltshire young people's support services and welfare for looked after children to ensure they receive sufficient education. The school provides up to 25 hours education for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) on behalf of Wiltshire Local Authority. The main aims are for young people to: experience positive achievement and success; acquire diverse skills and knowledge; and to become motivated and engaged students in the learning process. The school is in the ownership of On Track Education Services Ltd, a not-for-profit company. The company owns five similar establishments in other parts of the country. The school had a pre-registration visit from Ofsted in April 2009 and this is its first regulatory inspection.

Evaluation of the school

On Track Education Centre Westbury is in its second year of development and successfully meets its aims. It provides a good quality of education. The curriculum provides a good range of experiences to meet the wide range of students' needs. This, combined with the good quality of welfare, health and safety, ensures students make good progress in their learning and in the development of their confidence and self-esteem. The staff team has worked hard to establish a positive climate for learning but recognises that within the overall satisfactory teaching, assessment information could be gathered and used more effectively. The school now meets all the regulations for independent schools, including those relating to safeguarding.

Quality of education

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

The quality of the curriculum is good and is well tailored to the students' statements of special educational needs and personal learning plans. Students are well supported in their selection of a range of academic and vocational courses. These are underpinned by a curriculum policy and good schemes of work to support the teaching. In accordance with its aims, the school prepares individual programmes for students supported by Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) units of work. The curriculum is well organised and mapped to ensure that wherever possible students can access Level 2 courses which enables them to gain GCSE at grades A* to C in core subjects. Other subjects are provided for and based on entry level qualifications and unit awards. These ensure a good range of vocational courses are available and provide a good quality route into post-16 education. The flexibility of the curriculum is very appropriate for students aged between 14 and 16 years with behavioural and emotional needs and provides an appropriate focus on self-motivation and providing skills to live and work independently and constructively in the wider community.

The curriculum is well structured, balancing the small steps required of students with complex behavioural needs with their interests and enthusiasms. Work-based experiences are proving harder to find in the immediate area as competition is strong for this limited resource and the school is still becoming known to employers. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship programme includes topics which are relevant to the students' needs, for example with work on relationships, the consideration of different opinions and emotions, parenthood, drugs awareness and healthy lifestyles. Physical education is provided for well by regular swimming and weekly visits to a local sports centre.

Students receive a sufficient amount of taught time during the week at the centre, in other schools or at a local college. Lessons are appropriately kept to 40 minutes in length to help them maintain their attention. The school and the company recognise that the potential of the internet-based learning platform is underused largely because students are often unsupported in the home setting or lack the skills to manage this form of learning themselves. The requirements of students' statements of special educational needs are met fully. Additional support is provided for some, for example, with mediation and anger-management therapies. Students receive appropriate careers advice to prepare them for their next stage beyond school. There are a variety of trips and visits organised to enrich the curriculum that caters for students' interests as well as their academic and social needs.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. There is consistent quality in the implementation of the schemes of work and this benefits students and gives them confidence in their achievements. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a thorough knowledge of the approaches which are successful in educating students who have challenging behaviour. Praise and encouragement and self-assessment are used effectively to help engage students in their learning. Any difficulties experienced by the students are quickly understood by the teachers and adaptations are made or additional teaching is provided which is matched well to the learners' needs to

ensure good progress is maintained. Teachers and support assistants manage challenging behaviour in a calm and non-confrontational manner. Expectations of behaviour are linked to the specific needs of individual students, and collaborative or independent working skills are emphasised in lessons. In the best lessons good use was made of a mini plenary to establish and rehearse with the students what had been learnt. While lesson objectives are made clear the particular targets for advancing writing skills are not referred to in lessons or in lesson plans. This is because progress in writing skills is inadequately tracked, after the initial assessments.

Assessment information is based largely on the use of National Curriculum levels and progress through the award scheme units. The school's system for tracking students' progress does not distinguish between a student's reading and writing skills or their application of mathematical skills. This makes it difficult for teachers to set precise small-step targets to rapidly close the gap in students' attainment in writing and mathematics so as to raise expectations about progress in these areas. The flexible programmes tailored to meet their individual needs and the much needed stability that the school provides result in good achievements. Pupils make good progress overall and in developing their confidence and self-esteem. The vast majority are on track to re-engage with learning post-16. Their progress towards full independence and managing change is secure. They are enjoying learning and are successful in meeting the challenge of sustaining course work to a successful conclusion. Recent results show that all students achieve AQA units in several subjects and most are entered for several GCSE entry level qualifications.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. There are good opportunities for them to experience success and develop their self-esteem. There is a weekly meeting with their key worker when students review their achievements and shape their targets for the coming weeks. They enjoy coming to school and feel the school is helping them by providing a stable placement. Students' behaviour is good given their previous experiences and attendance for most is close to the 100% mark. Staff treat students with respect and explain the consequences to them of inappropriate behaviour. However, students' relationships with each other remain fragile and there are daily incidents of inappropriate behaviour which sometimes disrupt the flow of the school routine. Students get involved with national charity fund raising and a few show initiative in preparing snacks or organising projects such as recycling. But, they have too few opportunities to take on responsibilities in the school or to become involved in the local community.

Students develop a satisfactory understanding of public institutions and services through the citizenship curriculum, but aspects of the legal system and local and national government services are insufficiently promoted. They are made aware of different cultural traditions, for example by studying religious festivals and lifestyles

in different countries. Students are prepared effectively for their future economic well-being. They develop a broad range of vocational skills through the practical courses on offer and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for students' welfare health and safety is good. Staff display a high level of care and concern for students and are sensitive to their individual needs. Appropriate arrangements are in place to safeguard students, which include a suitable child protection policy and training for staff. The school has a good behaviour policy which emphasises the need for a positive approach when managing challenging behaviour. The implementation of this policy is effective in promoting good behaviour because the consequences of unacceptable behaviour are always made clear. All major incidents are logged and robust systems are in place for notifying all parties of the action taken and when sanctions have been invoked.

Policies and risk assessments cover all aspects of the school's work. Those items raised following the registration visit in 2009 have been duly attended to. The last fire risk assessment identified some minor concerns and all the recommendations have been acted upon. Risk assessments for the premises and off-site visits are thorough and routinely reviewed when new students are enrolled. An admissions register is in place and is held electronically. A manual attendance register records clearly those students who are on the school site and those who are receiving their education elsewhere. Students learn about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle in PSHE and food technology lessons. They all take part in regular exercise at the local sports hall and a few have joined sport-related clubs. However, several are regular smokers and the school allows them to smoke on site in a designated area.

The school has a suitable plan for improving access to the site which complies with the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 as amended.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Thorough procedures are in place for the recruitment and appointment of staff which are managed by the company's central office. All staff have been subject to satisfactory clearance at an advanced level with the Criminal Records Bureau to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Other necessary checks are carried out prior to appointment and information is recorded in a single central register as required.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The provision enables students to learn effectively and safely. Good use is made of the large central room for food technology, art and science to support teaching and learning. Three additional classrooms include a well-resourced computer suite. Rooms provide a pleasant environment for learning. Sufficient space for the numbers

registered is provided for outdoor recreation. This comprises a grassed area and a patio, but this is inadequately resourced with little equipment to occupy students at break times.

Provision of information

The school provides a prospectus for parents and carers which contains all the required information. Termly reports are completed for each student and are shared with parents and carers each term. These contain sufficient detail on their progress. Meetings are held at the required intervals to review the statements of special educational needs, for those students who are those looked after by the local authority and to consider their personal education plans.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a detailed complaints policy setting out how formal and informal complaints can be made to the school. It has recently been updated to meet all the regulations.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').³

What the school could do to improve further

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

- develop strategies for the more precise assessment of students' writing and mathematical skills
- use assessment information to match work more closely to the next steps in students' learning and to raise expectations about students' progress in their writing and mathematical skills
- improve the outdoor area as a learning resource and as an area for social interaction.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made

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

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special school		
Date school opened	April 2009		
Age range of pupils	11–18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 5	Girls: 2	Total: 7
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 3	Girls: 1	Total: 4
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 2	Girls: 1	Total: 3
Annual fees (day pupils)	£22,080		
Address of school	On Track Education Centre, Westbury Unit 7a, Trowbridge Road, Westbury Wiltshire, BA13 3AY		
Telephone number	01373 859803		
Email address	jholden@ontrackededucation.com		
Headteacher	Miss Johann Holden		
Proprietor	On Track Education Services Ltd		