

Redroofs Theatre School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	John Seal 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

Redroofs Theatre School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged from nine to 16 years. The school is part of Redroofs Associates, which includes a post-graduate provision, theatrical agency and theatre. It is registered for 70 pupils. At the time of the inspection, there were 46 pupils on roll. None of the pupils attending the school has a statement of special educational needs. A large proportion of the pupils are of White British heritage. The school is located in a single building, formally a residential property, which has been adapted and extended to provide appropriate specialist facilities. It is situated in a residential area of Maidenhead. It opened in 1981. The school was previously inspected in November 2007.

The school sees itself as a place 'where pupils are valued, where real confidence is borne and harnessed and where ambitions are recognised and encouraged.' It 'offers a realistic way into the [acting and the performing arts] industry, encouraging a strong work ethic, adaptability and self-reliance.'

Evaluation of the school

Redroofs provides a good quality of education and meets its aims and all but one of the regulatory requirements for independent schools, which is a significant improvement from the time of the previous inspection. Strengths of the school include the outstanding behaviour of the pupils, a good curriculum and good teaching and assessment which enable the pupils to make good progress. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the promotion of their welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The school has adequate safeguarding procedures.

Quality of education

The good curriculum has clear schemes of work and policies. The curriculum is organised into vocational and academic areas. The vocational activities include a range of musical theatre training, acting and dance. The academic curriculum covers English, mathematics, drama, French, science, art, the humanities and personal,

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

social and health education (PSHE) up to GCSE level. The school does not offer any specific sports or physical education lessons because of the high level of physical demands made in the vocational curriculum including fitness training. The school day alternates between younger pupils up to Year 8 following their academic studies in the morning with vocational activities in the afternoon, while pupils in Years 9 to 11 follow a similarly organised timetable but in reverse order. The school's PSHE plans meet requirements well and some aspects are also taught in subjects such as drama and science. The school's strengths can clearly be seen in the provision of high quality dance, drama and the musical opportunities provided.

The quality of curriculum in the academic subjects is good overall but there is variation between them. Pupils commented that some are more interesting and practically orientated than others. There was some evidence of this seen during the inspection. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well and information and communication technology (ICT) is developing to support work in other subjects, although the school realises there is more to be done to improve this aspect. Information, advice and guidance relating to the pupils' future careers are effective in supporting their wishes to become prepared for the world of show business. However, the plans and the timing of this work are only partially developed; the options for different careers are not always fully explained. Some pupils feel that they need better information earlier on in Key Stage 4 to help them be even more prepared for other courses or careers.

To enrich the curriculum, the school arranges for visitors to come into the school as well as for visits to a variety of theatre and music industry-related events and workshops; for example, recently, pupils visited a TV studio. In addition, all pupils take part in full-scale musicals and pantomimes in the school's associated theatre. Visits to sites of educational interest to support other subjects including, for example, places of local historical interest, are less frequent. A few of the pupils and parents and carers who returned questionnaires stated that they felt there could be a better balance between the visits to performance events and places of wider educational value.

Teaching and assessment are good and enable pupils to make good progress. There are many good lessons and some that are outstanding. However, there is some variation between the quality of the vocational and the academic lessons. A consistently high standard of teaching supports pupils' learning in all aspects of the vocational provision, some of which is outstanding. Across the academic lessons, the range of teaching is more variable in quality with a few satisfactory lessons. Whether vocational or academic, the best lessons are typically highly interactive and practical. Teachers' good subject knowledge supports their good questioning. They encourage pupils to become involved in their learning promptly at the start of lessons, often in a pacy and exciting manner. They explain what pupils need to do to improve, demonstrate or model good practice themselves or encourage one of the pupils to provide an example for discussion. These sessions are well planned and teachers have high expectations of pupils' work, behaviour and preparedness for learning. In

these lessons, pupils are enthused, interested and are often challenged to go beyond what they may think they are able to do. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are outstanding. As a result, they make good progress. In the few less effective lessons, pupils are too highly directed by teachers and provided with the same work regardless of their ability. Opportunities for pupils to engage in discussions about their work with each other or to take part in practical activities are more limited in these lessons. In weaker lessons, there is too little feedback about how pupils can improve their learning. In these lessons, pupils can become restless and disinterested, leading to slower progress.

The standard of homework provided is at times variable in quality. Although mostly good, a few pupils said they found it too easy at times, when others said it was too hard, and that sometimes it was not followed up in later lessons. The school has good assessment structures in place. Generally, work in books and files is regularly marked. Marking of vocational activities is well matched to the various nationally standardised syllabi. In a few cases, there is a lack of rigour and consistency in providing pupils with clear targets or criteria for achieving better grades at GCSE. There are appropriate structures in place for regular assessments of work and termly reports informing pupils, parents and carers of their current attainment based on nationally standardised test results.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The energetic and purposeful atmosphere of the school ensures that all pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Relationships between pupils of different ages and with staff are highly positive. One pupil said, 'Being at Redroofs is like being part of a family.' Pupils work well together and this is often seen in the various performance related activities. During break and lunch times, pupils socialise well. One girl said 'It feels like "Fame"; sometimes we stand around the piano singing!'

There is a good level of understanding of different faiths and religions. Tolerance and support are encouraged throughout the school and, as a result, there are very high levels of harmony. Pupils' attitudes to school and their learning are generally highly positive, especially for the vocational activities. This can be seen in their regular attendance and enthusiasm in most of their work. Pupils' good grounding in basic skills and their involvement in performance opportunities outside the school, for example working with major TV productions and West End shows, prepare them very well for their future lives. Pupils make good contributions to the wider community through a range of activities, including performing and running workshops for senior citizens, in hospitals and special schools locally and raising awareness of the charity 'Rosie's Rainbow Fund.' During the week of the inspection, the whole school performed in a large fund-raising event, 'Voice in a Million', at the O2 Arena to raise awareness about orphaned or abandoned children. Pupils carry out informal jobs around the school and can take on responsibilities such as head girl and boy. Nonetheless, pupils are keen to be more involved in school decision-making and this

was reflected in the pupils' responses to the questionnaires and in discussions with the inspector. Pupils learn about public institutions in England in history and PSHE.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory, which is a significant improvement from the time of the last inspection. Pupils' safety is carefully and conscientiously considered and appropriate actions are taken to ensure their safety both on and off-site. Pupils' health and safety off-site are supported appropriately, for example, licensed chaperones are employed when pupils are performing out of school. All staff are aware of safeguarding and child protection procedures and have been trained to the appropriate level. However, the training for the designated child protection officer has not yet been undertaken at the required higher level. The school recognises this shortcoming and has firm arrangements in place for training to be carried out in the very near future.

Pupils are aware of how to live a healthy lifestyle and some pupils were recently involved in a radio programme on eating disorders amongst dancers. Pupils generally know how to eat healthily, although some pupils noted that a few of their peers eat less healthy options during break and lunchtimes. The active lifestyle of the pupils through the vocational activities ensures a high proportion of the day involves plenty of physical exercise. The school has an accessibility plan which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has carried out the required checks on all staff and proprietors prior to their appointment to make sure there are no reasons why they should not be employed to work with children. The checks are recorded, as required, in a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises and accommodation meet all the regulatory requirements, which is an improvement from the time of the previous inspection. All classrooms are in a reasonable condition and are suitable for the planned curriculum and the numbers on roll. There are specialist rooms including multi-purpose studios. There is an appropriately designated room for pupils if they become ill. There is a garden for pupils to use during breaktimes.

Provision of information

The school provides appropriate information for current and prospective parents, carers and others on request. There is a suitable prospectus and website. Most of the parental questionnaires returned were highly positive, although a few raised concerns about receiving enough information about their children's progress. The

inspection found that the school regularly provides formal and informal reports and feedback about how their children are progressing, both academically and socially.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints procedure meets requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of the one listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure that the designated child protection officer receives the appropriate advanced training (paragraph 7).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- ensure that all the teaching, both academic or vocational, matches the quality of the best in the school
- develop a more formal and well-planned programme of careers guidance that better meets the needs of pupils
- develop a more varied programme of educational visits which is more related the requirements of the academic subjects
- improve the systems to enable pupils' views to be taken into account in the school's decision-making processes.

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 day		
Type of school	Theatre		
Date school opened	1981		
Age range of pupils	9–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 15	Girls: 31	Total: 46
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,491–10,296		
Address of school	26 Bath Road, Castle Hill, Maidenhead Berkshire, SL6 4JT		
Telephone number	01628 674092		
Email address	sam@redroofs.co.uk		
Headteachers	Samantha Keston-Bloom Carolyn Mayling		
Proprietors	Mrs J Rose, Samantha Keston-Bloom Carolyn Mayling		