

# On Track Education Centre (Mildenhall)

Independent school standard inspection report

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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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## Information about the school

On Track Education Centre in Mildenhall is an independent special school, registered for 32 students aged 11 to 18 with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. It opened in April 2005 and is one of six schools owned by the proprietors On Track Education Limited. Currently there are 24 students of both genders on roll, who are placed at the school by two local authorities; Norfolk and Suffolk. All students have histories of educational failure, poor attendance and exclusion from mainstream education prior to their admission to the school. Many have histories of severe challenging behaviour. Nearly all students have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many have additional disabilities and special educational needs which include specific learning difficulties, dyslexia, social communication difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism. There are three students who are looked after by the local authority. Nearly all students are of White British heritage and none speak English as an additional language.

The school's mission is to provide students with a sense of success and positive achievement in their personal and academic skills. It aims to develop positive attitudes to learning and prepare students with diverse skills and knowledge for adult life. Students are taught through individualised learning approaches using selected elements from the National Curriculum and external accreditation.

The school also provides outreach services, which are managed centrally for a further two students. Two additional members of staff deliver this service, which was not part of this inspection. The school was last inspected in February 2009.

## Evaluation of the school

The On Track Education Centre (Mildenhall) provides a good quality of education for its students and meets all the regulations as an independent school. The curriculum is good and provides a wide range of academic, vocational and outdoor learning experiences to sustain students' interest and re-engage them with learning. Excellent pastoral care and robust safeguarding procedures are strong aspects of the good

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

provision for students' welfare, health and safety. As a result, students' behaviour is good and they make outstanding progress in their personal development. Good teaching and assessment enables students to make good progress. The school has successfully met the points for development identified at the last inspection.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is good and provides a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities which are personalised to each individual student's needs and interests. Students have opportunities to enter for a wide range of examination courses, including GCSE courses, AQA Unit Awards and Entry Level Certificates. They also engage in practical and vocational courses, which include construction, catering, horticulture, enterprise, life skills and work-related learning. Wherever possible, students in Years 10 and 11 are placed on GCSE courses depending on their time of admission. At Key Stage 3 they begin to prepare for Entry Level or Unit Awards. The strong emphasis on the core subjects of mathematics, English, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and personal, social and health education (PSHE) at both Key Stages, prepares all students well for the next stage of their lives. In addition, students have good opportunities to learn art and craft, history, geography, religious education, design and technology, catering, fitness, music and general studies.

The curriculum is appropriate for students with statements of special educational needs. It takes full account of the provision specified on the statement, which is included in the personal education plan. The very few students in the sixth form follow personalised programmes to prepare them for the next stage of their lives and the world of work.

Teaching and the use of assessment are good. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge very effectively to deepen students' learning. Their thorough knowledge of students' individual needs is based on accurate assessments. These are written into personalised lesson plans for each student, to ensure that the content of each lesson and the learning activities are matched closely to individual needs. As a result, all lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and good promotion of literacy and ICT skills. Learning resources are well-chosen and used effectively in lessons, as seen for example in a history lesson, where ICT was used by students to research the Great Fire of London. Lessons proceed at a brisk and lively pace with teachers making good use of time. This ensures students remain focused on their learning and make good progress in lessons.

Good assessment ensures that students' progress is tracked against the National Curriculum grade descriptors, GCSE grades and other examination criteria. The levels which they are expected to achieve are recorded on the personalised lesson plan which includes good opportunities for them to assess their own learning. However, because of some inconsistency in marking, students do not always know their next steps in learning. Baseline assessments take place on admission to school and are

completed within two weeks of placement. Parents and carers receive detailed termly reports on their child's progress and achievements.

Students make good progress in learning and outstanding progress in their personal development. They very quickly re-engage with learning. By the end of Year 11, they have gained a wide range of qualifications, including between two and five GCSE passes, and most successfully move on to further education or employment. Their good progress in basic skills and independent living ensures they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives. The very few students at post-16 make good progress in independence skills and work-related learning and are prepared well for apprenticeships or further education. Students throughout the school acknowledge the good progress they are making and typically one commented, 'If it wasn't for this school, I wouldn't be where I am today!'

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They increase their confidence and self-esteem through decision making and through the praise and encouragement they receive from staff. This is reflected in one student's description of the school as 'awesome!'

Behaviour is good. Students are well-behaved in lessons and around the school. They make excellent progress in behaviour and develop positive attitudes to school. Most students, in their questionnaires and in discussion, said that behaviour was usually good and bullying was rare. Nearly all students make at least good progress in attendance. Students say they feel safe and secure in the school.

Students make a good contribution as volunteers in school, for example, through preparing lunch time meals for the school community. They also contribute well to the wider community in raising funds on behalf of the Mountain Trust to sponsor a Nepalese child's education. This helps students to develop their understanding of global diversity. They also develop further awareness and appreciation of diversity by learning about world religions, considering the effects of global warming and the destruction of the rainforests on world communities, producing art in the style of other artists, and appreciating different forms of music.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. The company's robust policies and procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of its students are implemented effectively. All staff have received relevant and updated training, including that provided by the local safeguarding board. The well-conceived child protection policy includes the name of the designated person and useful contact addresses. It provides useful guidance to staff on the identification and procedures to follow in the event of any abuse. This is supplemented by a range of policies such

as anti-bullying, and behaviour and discipline to promote students' safety and good behaviour. All potential risks are thoroughly assessed both on site and for off-site visits and activities. Fire prevention procedures, the regular testing of electrical appliances and first aid procedures are implemented effectively. Excellent arrangements for pastoral care through strong team work, excellent relationships between staff and students and consistency in ensuring students' safety and well-being result in the excellent progress students make in their behaviour and personal development. The school has a clear three-year Accessibility Plan which fulfils its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The school implements thorough procedures for the selection, recruitment and appointment of staff. Procedures for checking the suitability of proprietors and visitors also meet requirements. The single central register accurately records all checks made with appropriate dates and signatures before staff were appointed.

### **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The school occupies a purpose-built industrial unit which provides a safe and secure learning environment. It has good access to local recreational space and facilities to compensate for the small outdoor recreational area. All classrooms are in good decorative order, with suitable lighting, ventilation and heating. Attractive displays of students' work create a warm atmosphere for purposeful learning. The accommodation also includes an indoor recreational area, a large workshop for vocational studies, a small ICT suite, an indoor gym, a meeting room, a clean and well-maintained kitchen for the safe preparation of food, and a well-resourced office. There are sufficient separate washroom facilities for boys, girls and staff and a dedicated rest room for students who are ill.

### **Provision of information**

Parents and carers receive clear information about the curriculum and a full range of policies in the school's brochure and through its website. They also receive termly reports which are detailed and provide good information about their child's learning progress, achievements, behaviour and attendance.

### **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school's detailed complaints policy sets out how complaints can be made and investigated formally and informally. It meets 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').

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following point for development.

- Ensure greater consistency in marking so that students always know the next steps for their learning.



## 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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## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special		
<b>Date school opened</b>	1 April 2005		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11-17 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 22	Girls: 2	Total: 24
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 22	Girls: 2	Total: 24
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£ 23040-£32600		
<b>Address of school</b>	82 Fred Dannatt Road, , Mildenhall, IP28 7RD		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01638 715555		
<b>Email address</b>	rdurrant@ontrackededucation.com		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ruth Durrant		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Jan Grayson		

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



21 March 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of On Track Education Centre (Mildenhall), Mildenhall, IP28 7RD**

Thank you for making me feel welcome when I visited your school recently. Thank you also for sharing your views with me. I was impressed with your good behaviour and attendance and your positive attitudes to learning. You told me how good your school is and I agree that it is a good school. I also found that you have a wide range of good learning opportunities which you enjoy. These, together with good teaching and assessment, ensure you make good progress. A particular strength is the excellent pastoral care which you receive enabling you to make excellent progress in your behaviour. The school has good arrangements for ensuring your welfare, health and safety. For instance, it always checks the suitability of staff and any visitors. I was pleased when you told me how safe you feel in school.

Your school meets all legal requirements and I have suggested one thing to make it even better. I have asked teachers to make sure that their marking always helps you to know your next steps for learning. You can help by asking your teachers how you can extend your learning even further.

Good luck in your forthcoming examinations

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy  
Lead inspector