

Insights Independent School

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	307/6339
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135493
Inspection number	393297
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2012
Reporting inspector	Mike Kell

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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

Insights is a non-denominational day special school in West Ealing. It opened in 2008. It was last inspected in January 2009, when it was registered for 60 students in the age range 11 to 16 years. The school then moved to new, larger premises and in 2011 was given approval to extend the age range to 7 to 18 years and to increase the number of students to a maximum of 100. The school's proprietor is Insights ESC Limited, a company that operates just this one school. The main school is located in a suburban area and is housed in premises that were offices until the school redesigned the building as purpose-built accommodation. A second site, a short walk away, is used for one-to-one support work and for providing workshops for post-16 students. This accommodation is the whole of the upper floor of a two-storey building, the ground floor of which is used by a community group.

There are 37 students on roll, all but 2 of whom are boys. Three students are above the age of sixteen years. All students except one have statements of special educational needs. These generally relate to behavioural, social and emotional difficulties, although a significant minority of students have autism or a specific learning difficulty. Just over a third of students are of White British heritage and a similar proportion has a Black or Black British heritage. Many students have not attended school for significant lengths of time before joining this school.

The school's aims are: 'for students to become effective communicators, to develop the necessary social skills to lead fulfilling, independent lives and to build confident and positive attitudes towards their learning'. Its ethos is to promote the values of acceptance, tolerance and mutual respect.

Evaluation of the school

Insights Independent School provides a good quality of education and it meets its aims successfully. It has built well on the outcomes of the previous inspection; it continues to meet all regulations while some features of its work have improved. The curriculum is outstanding because it provides students with a wealth of learning opportunities both in and out of school that enables them to make good academic progress and outstanding progress in aspects of their personal development. Overall, students make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

development. Teaching is good and assessment procedures are used well to promote learning and to evaluate students' achievement. Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding and is underpinned by very rigorous safeguarding procedures.

Quality of education

The outstanding and extremely well-constructed curriculum is an important factor in helping students and their families to re-engage with education after lengthy periods out of school. It does this by stimulating students' interest and reigniting an interest in learning by ensuring that all students' needs are met extremely well, including those of the very few girls on roll. Detailed planning ensures that students receive progressively challenging and varied learning activities as they move through the school. Topics studied in the personal, social and health education programme closely match students' ages and interests, with a growing emphasis on themes that prepare them well for leaving school.

The curriculum in the primary phase and in Key Stage 3 encompasses a broad range of subjects that strongly promotes students' acquisition of key literacy, communication and numeracy skills. The Key Stage 4 curriculum builds on this very effectively with students having the option to choose an individual learning pathway that is primarily academic or vocational, or a mixture of the two. All pathways provide a variety of accredited courses, with vocational subjects being taught at a local college. All students receive careers education and participate in work experience. The post-16 curriculum focuses students' attention even more on preparation for leaving school. Vocational education and courses that extend functional literacy and numeracy skills are supplemented extremely well by planned personal development programmes. These consider, for instance, independent living, seeking employment and workers' rights and responsibilities, healthy living, personal and social skills such as working with others, problem solving and anger management.

An impressive feature of the curriculum is the way in which it is enriched and extended to encourage students' learning and personal development. A very well-planned programme of visits gives students opportunities to practise in real-life situations the academic and personal skills they have learned in the classroom. For instance, visits to places such as the Old Bailey and the Bank of England reinforce the students' awareness of citizenship in addition to requiring the application of learned literacy, numeracy and social skills. A residential stay for outdoor education helps students to learn about living in a community, whilst a visit to Auschwitz made a powerful contribution to their spiritual development. After-school study groups and clubs support students' progress very well, in addition to enabling them to pursue leisure activities.

Teaching and assessment are good, so that students learn at a good pace and achieve well, irrespective of the nature of their learning difficulty or disability, ethnic background, or gender. Parents and carers as well as local authorities agree unanimously that students make good progress from their starting points. Staff know

the students particularly well. They have a very good appreciation of the nature of their learning difficulties and are sensitive to issues that arise out of school but which may adversely impact on students' learning. Despite this, they retain high expectations of work and behaviour. Teachers promote students' communication skills effectively, with many opportunities for them to engage in discussion. Such activities also do much to develop students' social skills, such as listening to others and respecting their views. Good improvements in reading and writing contribute much to students' good progress, and one-to-one teaching sessions support individuals well. Therefore, students are successful in a good range of accredited examinations and, for the first time, a few students are on track to achieve grade C or better in some GCSE examinations.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and they generally establish good relationships with students. Consequently, in the majority of lessons minor disruptive behaviour is rare. When it does occur, teachers usually deploy the school's behaviour management procedure effectively, although not all do this consistently or sufficiently quickly. At these times the rate of learning suffers, so that teaching is not outstanding overall. Teachers use their knowledge of students' previous achievements and capabilities effectively when planning lessons. Students' work is marked routinely and teachers provide students with good information about how it can be improved. Students and their parents and carers know their personal targets and staff provide effective ongoing guidance about what students need to do in order to attain them. Consistent assessment procedures ensure that students' progress is tracked against their starting points, but the school does not attempt to determine the value that it adds to students' progress by comparing their performance with students of similar levels of attainment and starting points elsewhere.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall with some aspects of their personal development being outstanding because of the impact of the outstanding curriculum. Students generally have a dismissive attitude towards education when they join the school, but in most cases the school is able to turn around these negative views. This success in helping students to value education and develop their self-worth is in part a result of a school culture that values individuals and expects the best of them, although planned interventions also support this process extremely well. There is an 'alternative learning programme' which comprises a small team that liaises with families, teachers, a variety of therapists and counsellors to support students' transition and which can intervene when individuals experience crises. The learning agreement with students and their families and the school's golden rules and behaviour code do much to enable students to make good progress in their understanding of right and wrong.

Bullying and other forms of harassment are taken very seriously, although they are relatively rare as many students show good progress in managing their own behaviour. Behaviour overall is good even though a small minority of students find it difficult to take responsibility for their actions. This reluctance of a few to accept

responsibility is also evident in attendance data, which show that attendance is below average due to a small number of persistent absentees. Students show good progress in their appreciation of how they can contribute to the life of the school, such as by voting on suggestions and requests for changes in the school. They contribute to the wider community through fundraising events for national charities, and locally by hosting an annual Christmas lunch for senior citizens.

The school plans very many events and activities that extend students' horizons and expose them to circumstances that are outside their day-to-day experiences. These activities make significant contributions to students' spiritual and cultural development in particular. Consequently, students make outstanding progress in their understanding of Britain as a society, both in terms of its multicultural nature and of their awareness of those bodies that govern and influence it.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. Rigorous checks ensure the safe recruitment of staff and health and safety policies pay due regard to national guidance. The school meets requirements in respect of the Equality Act 2010.

The school's very rigorous approach to fire precautions, risk assessments and staff training all ensure that the school is a safe environment. Students are very well supervised, and all staff members' training for child protection and physical intervention procedures is up-to-date and at the required level. In addition, a sufficient number of trained first aiders implement a comprehensive policy. The application of well-considered policies and procedures promotes students' good behaviour and counteracts any tendency towards bullying or other intimidating behaviour. An overwhelming number of families and their children agree that students are looked after well and are safe in school, and this opinion is supported by local authorities. Very effective procedures ensure students' safety when the students are engaged in community-based learning.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Rigorously applied recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that checks are thorough. Staff files contain all the detail that is required prior to a new appointee beginning work, and all the required information is held centrally in a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The main site provides good quality accommodation that fulfils all the regulations. The spacious building is bright and airy and is maintained to a good standard. The fabric of the building is in a good state of repair, and the decoration is smart and free of graffiti. There is a secure, albeit small, outdoor play area for students' use at break and lunchtime. The second site is also maintained to a high standard. Although parts of this accommodation are sometimes made available to outside bodies for

meetings or seminars, students' safety and welfare are not compromised in any way as students are always closely supervised by staff.

Provision of information

A detailed prospectus and an informative website provide parents and carers and local authorities with the required, up-to-date information. The school has responded very well to the previous inspection report's recommendation that it should provide parents and carers with more detailed reports about their children's learning and targets. These reports are very comprehensive and informative and they are also supplied to local authorities, who also receive detailed reports when students' statements of special educational needs are reviewed.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a detailed policy for investigating complaints that might be raised by students or their parents or carers. The different stages of the process are stated clearly and the procedures meet all 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:

- ensure that all teachers apply the school's behaviour management procedure consistently and that their interventions are well-timed
- develop systems to compare the school's own assessment data with information about students' performance in similar schools nationally.

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	Day special		
Date school opened	2008		
Age range of pupils	7–18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 35	Girls: 2	Total: 37
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 34	Girls: 2	Total: 36
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 4	Girls: 1	Total: 5
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,000		
Address of school	3–5 Alexandra Road West Ealing London W13 0NP		
Telephone number	020 8840 9099		
Email address	barbaraquartey@insightsesc.co.uk		
Headteacher	Barbara Quartey		
Proprietor	Insights ESC Limited		

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.



18 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Insights Independent School, London W13 ONP

Thank you very much for welcoming me into your school. I spent two very enjoyable days with you and thank you for finding time to talk to me. You told me that you enjoy school and that you learn a lot. I can see why you think that, because Insights provides you with a good education.

Teaching is good and you make good progress in your work. This helps to prepare you well for leaving school. The school provides an excellent variety of interesting activities during the day and after school. The range of visits that you go on, especially the residential ones, is excellent. I was impressed with how many of you go to school as often as you can, have good attitudes and behave well. As a result, you become more mature and thoughtful young people. However, there is a small group of you who do not attend school as often as you should and a few of you still have difficulty in managing your behaviour. This causes disruptions that sometimes affect you and your classmates. The school takes excellent care of you and the staff make sure that you are safe in school and when you go into the community.

Those who run your school want to make it even better and I have them given ideas to help:

- make sure that teachers always correct misbehaviour in lessons quickly
- compare the progress that you make in your work with that made by students of a similar age in schools elsewhere.

Finally, thank you once again and I wish each of you every success in the future, especially if you are taking examinations and leaving school this year.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell
Lead inspector