

Education and Youth Services Ltd (4)

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Angela Corbett 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

Education and Youth Services Ltd (4) is an independent special day school based in High Wycombe for students aged 14 to 16 years. It is owned by Education Youth Services Ltd (EYS), a group that operates several other centres and schools nationwide and provides education for students with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties (BESD). The school, also called a 'Restart School', opened in September 2007 in High Wycombe. Since the last inspection in June 2009, a second 'Restart School' has been established in Chesham in a former church hall; each school has its own centre head with a manager having overall responsibility. This inspection covered both schools.

There are currently 18 students on roll, with five at High Wycombe and 13 at Chesham, aged from 14 to 16 years. Two students are in the care of the local authority and 10 have a statement of special educational needs. Many have a history of long-term absence from school. All places are purchased annually by Buckinghamshire local authority for students who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools or other special school provision. The school is now seeking approval from the Department for Education to increase the number of students to 35; with 15 at the High Wycombe site and 20 at Chesham.

The school at High Wycombe 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.

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

Evaluation of the school

EYS provides a satisfactory standard of education. The school meets its aims effectively by helping its students to be re-engaged in education and make progress in their learning. There has been good improvement since the last inspection; for example, the curriculum has been overhauled to better meet students' needs and interests, and is now good. This, together with strong pastoral support, is leading to

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

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

students' good behaviour, and good personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students' academic progress is satisfactory rather than good because some of the curriculum improvements have yet to have a full impact on students' outcomes and there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory overall. Safeguarding, including welfare, health and safety arrangements, is good. The school has ensured that all regulations are now met, made improvements to the High Wycombe site and suitably adapted the church hall for the new school at Chesham. Consequently, it is recommended that the number of students for which the school is registered be increased to 35, with 15 at High Wycombe and 20 at Chesham.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and covers all the required areas of learning. It now provides students with a much wider range of academic and vocational qualifications that are suitably matched to their abilities and current levels of development. Some of these developments have yet to have a full impact on students' progress, such as an accredited course in science. Accreditation is through BTEC and functional skills in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT). However, GCSEs have yet to be introduced, although the school is about to explore this. Schemes of work to support all areas of the curriculum have been rewritten. These are of good quality and provide teachers with details of the content to be taught, ideas for delivery, supporting resources and guidance on meeting the differing needs of students. To raise achievement and prepare students for employment, education or training, there is strong promotion of students' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. However, opportunities are missed both in and out of lessons for teachers to develop students' speaking skills. Each student's timetable is personalised to their needs with access to work experience opportunities and off-site courses. Visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities enhance the curriculum but these are not systematically planned to ensure full breadth of educational experience.

The curriculum for students' personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is good, and is enhanced by a range of good partnerships with external agencies such as Connexions, and specialist providers, for example Street Dreams, who provide health and sex education. Classroom resources in both schools are adequate, although specialist resources are limited in the scientific and technological areas. Use of visits to the science and natural history museums or partners such as 'SKIDZ' help compensate for this.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Central to teaching across both schools are the good relationships between staff and students, the consistently applied behaviour management systems and a conviction that students will achieve, regardless of previous education experiences. These principles develop students' self-esteem and improve their attitudes to learning. All students tend to be too reliant on the teachers to support their learning rather than taking responsibility for

themselves. Nonetheless, some teaching is good. In these lessons, students make good progress because teachers set high expectations of what they can achieve, provide clarity on what they will learn and routinely check learning as the lesson progresses. Teachers use good subject knowledge and adopt a variety of approaches and tasks to maintain students' interests and concentration, and ensure a brisk pace of learning. For example, in one science lesson, learning was carefully tailored to meet the different needs of the students. They engaged well in the practical tasks and the teacher's effective and frequent questioning checked, reinforced and promoted good learning on the seven processes of life. However, across the two schools, such good practice is not consistent. In the less effective lessons, progress is slower because teachers' subject knowledge is less secure, they provide students with too few opportunities for creative, practical or active tasks, and questioning is not used effectively to check or extend learning. Teachers are sometimes too reliant on the detailed guidance in the schemes of work and do not use assessment information in planning to adapt their lessons to meet the needs of the full range of students, in particular, to challenge the more able.

Students' work is routinely marked, although there is some variation in the quality and helpfulness of written comments in focusing students on the next steps in their learning. The school now has a clear framework for assessing students' progress. A range of tests are used to assess students on entry. Diagnostic information from these and termly tests, together with teacher assessments, are usually used well to develop individual education development plans for each student, including those with a statement of special educational needs. Targets are set, and reviewed half-termly, to improve behaviour, social skills, English and mathematics. However, insufficient account is taken of assessment information to track students' progress from their starting points to ensure they all achieve the highest level of qualifications possible. Students said they feel that they are making good progress. In 2012, the majority achieved at least four qualifications, with most gaining accreditation in both English and mathematics. However, inspection evidence from lesson observations, school data and scrutiny of books indicates that their progress varies both in and between the two schools. Consequently it is satisfactory overall.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their personal development is good because staff work to ensure students feel valued and have every opportunity to succeed. As their attitudes improve and their self-esteem grows, they are able to make decisions about their future lives. Students respond well to the high expectations and the positive approach to behaviour management and make good progress in managing their own behaviour both in lessons and around school. Students generally get on well and there is a calm learning environment in each school. The majority of students attend regularly, a significant improvement from their previous schools, and for some this is their longest time in any school. Student forums at both sites enable them to make suggestions about how to improve school life. They participate in school life by

helping prepare meals and organising events such as a table tennis competition, and in the wider community, through charity fundraising.

Current affairs, personal and social development, and citizenship lessons enable them to make good progress in their social and moral development as well as to explore their rights and responsibilities, and develop their knowledge of public institutions and services. For example, they were seen discussing issues such as prison sentences, 'parenting' and the difference between civil and criminal offences during the inspection. However, spiritual development is satisfactory rather than good because students are not given enough opportunities to be inspired or reflect on the world around them. Cultural development is now good. The revised curriculum provides good focus on different religions, which includes visits to places of worship and consideration of how people live in different communities within Britain as well as overseas, and the arts through, for example, art lessons and poetry days. However, the range of visits and visitors to develop this last aspect of cultural understanding, in particular, is limited.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of students at both sites is good. A common approach is taken to ensure students' safety and well-being. An appropriate range of detailed policies and procedures are in place and tailored to each school. Although they are reviewed annually, it is not clear how their effectiveness is evaluated and practice changed. Staff have up-to-date training in both first aid and child protection. Risk assessments for the accommodation, including fire safety, and activities are undertaken diligently at both sites. Fire safety checks and drills are undertaken regularly, and recorded appropriately, although the Chesham site has yet to have a drill for the new term. Arrangements for safeguarding are appropriate. All incidents and accidents are carefully recorded and reviewed. Students have a clear understanding of the school's positive behaviour management system, which also outlines sanctions including exclusion from school. Good attention is given to developing students' understanding of how to live a safe and healthy lifestyle, through, for example, PSHCE lessons and by encouraging them to eat healthily at lunchtimes. External organisations, such as 'Addaction', are used well to help students' understand the dangers of alcohol, drugs and knife crime. However, smoking, with parental permission, is allowed in designated outside areas at both sites, although more could be done to reduce this. Staff at both schools supervise students well, are extremely supportive and provide a nurturing environment. As a result, students at both schools say they feel safe, supported and always have someone to whom they can turn. Use of inappropriate language and bullying is immediately and effectively addressed. Links with external agencies and organisations, including Buckinghamshire local authority, are used very effectively to provide further support for students and their families.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Recruitment procedures to ensure the suitability of staff at both the High Wycombe and Chesham schools, as well as EYS staff who routinely visit, meet requirements. As required, checks are recorded on the single central register, although it required minor amendment during the inspection.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's premises and accommodation at both sites are of adequate quality and enable students to learn effectively and safely. The proprietors have continued to improve the accommodation at High Wycombe. New lighting, new carpeting and the partitioning of the larger classroom into two smaller rooms have all improved the quality of the learning environment, which is well respected by the students. The shared use of the school at High Wycombe by 'e2e' three days a week by small numbers of older students is well managed. A former church hall has been adapted and resourced to accommodate the new 'Restart School' at Chesham. Classrooms at both sites are suitably sized and in reasonable decorative order. However, there are few specialist facilities at either site, other than a small kitchen and an information and communication technology suite. There is a very small music technology room at High Wycombe. There is a small but adequate outside area at the Chesham school but there are no grounds attached to the building at High Wycombe. The school makes good arrangements for physical activities at a range of local centres.

Provision of information

Some general information about the education provision is provided on the EYS website. A 'Restart Pack', personalised for each school, covers all requirements and provides parents, carers and others with a good overview of the EYS ethos and provision. Parents and carers receive termly reports. An annual written report details students' learning, behaviour, participation and attitudes, and the areas for improvement in each subject, as well as setting learning targets for the coming term. However, while these reports have improved since the last inspection, there is some variability in the quality and helpfulness within and across subjects, and there is no final report at the end of Year 11. Information on students' academic and personal development is provided for regular review meetings of all students, including the annual review for those with statements of special educational needs. Annual financial information is sent to Buckinghamshire local authority.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints procedure meets the 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').

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 quality of teaching to ensure students make better progress by
 - making greater use of assessment information to track students' progress from their starting points and planning lessons to meet the needs of all learners, in particular, the more able
 - including more opportunities for creative, practical and active learning in lessons to enthuse students and help them maintain their concentration
 - using questioning and discussions, both in and out of lessons, to develop students' speaking skills
 - encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning and develop skills to assess their own and others' work.
- Develop the curriculum by:
 - broadening the range of extra-curricular activities, including visiting speakers and off-site visits, to provide students with a greater range of educational experiences
 - providing more opportunities for students' spiritual development.

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 for students with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties		
Date school opened	September 2007		
Age range of pupils	14–16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 15	Girls: 3	Total: 18
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 8	Girls: 2	Total: 10
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£15,500		
Address of school	Unit 3 – Spearmast Industrial Estate High Wycombe HP12 4JG Church Hall Station Rd Chesham HP5 1DB		
Telephone number	01494 525738		
Email address	t.whitlock@eys.org.uk		
Headteacher	Tom Whitlock		
Proprietor	Richard Atkinson, chief executive of Education and Youth Services Ltd		

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.

12 October 2012

Dear Students



Inspection of Education and Youth Services Ltd (4), known as EYS, High Wycombe, HP12 4JG

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited both the Chesham and High Wycombe sites, and also my colleague who spent the day at the Chesham school. We very much enjoyed talking with you and visiting your lessons. We judged that EYS School provides a satisfactory quality of education. Here is a summary of our main inspection findings.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, and although you learn well in some lessons, overall, you make satisfactory progress. The curriculum is good because you are now able to work for a much wider range of qualifications, such as in science. You particularly enjoy the programme of sport, other activities such as the recent visits to museums in London, and special programmes such as that provided by 'Addaction'. These all help you learn to stay safe and make good progress in your personal development. You feel safe in school because staff provide you with effective support and give good attention to your welfare, health and safety. Most of you attend as regularly as you can and much better than at your previous schools. Well done!

All the staff are committed to doing their best for you. To help them improve your school, I have asked that they:

- improve teaching by planning lessons to better meet your needs, making your lessons more practical, giving you more opportunities to be creative and assess your own and others' work, and helping you to develop your speaking skills
- provide you with a greater range of visits, visitors to school and out-of-lesson activities.

All of you can help by continuing to make the most of the opportunities offered to you. I would like to wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Angela Corbett
Her Majesty's Inspector