

# Prism Independent School

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

Prism Independent School is a registered charity called the Prism Youth Project. The school provides education for boys and girls with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). It is registered to admit 110 students aged between 11 and 19 years. There are currently 71 students on roll aged between 12 and 19 years. Students up to the age of 16 are on the roll of their mainstream school, but attend Prism Independent School for some sessions. Post-16 students are self-referred. There are 15 students with a statement of special educational needs and six are looked after by their local authority. The school is on three sites; two on Walker Drive in Gillington, Bradford, including a city farm, and the third site is in Keighley which is a centre for horticulture.

The school aims 'to provide a challenging and relevant curriculum which meets individual needs within a caring and safe environment'. This is the school's first inspection since its registration as an independent school in December 2011.

## Evaluation of the school

Prism Independent School provides a satisfactory quality of education and meets its aims successfully. Students make satisfactory progress because the quality of teaching, assessment and the curriculum is satisfactory. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and their behaviour is satisfactory because the school ensures that students make improvements in respect of their behavioural, social and emotional development. Provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is good and the procedures for safeguarding meet requirements. The school meets all of the independent school regulations.

## Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and enables students to make satisfactory progress. There is an appropriate focus on developing functional skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Students have opportunities to practise these skills in other areas of the curriculum for example, in a music session, students used ICT skills to develop their understanding

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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).

of different types of microphones in the recording studio. There is a satisfactory range of subjects with some aspects such as science being taught through other subjects such as physical education, or the opportunities for horticulture and animal care. There are appropriate long-term, medium-term and short-term plans in place for each subject and planning is in a consistent format across the school although the level of detail can vary. Students are able to attain accreditation in BTEC Entry Level Awards in a range of subjects such as art and design, animal care, land-based studies, construction, sports and leisure and home cooking as well as in functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT. The school engages students in a range of different projects, such as a multi-media project where students are engaged in film making, graphic design, drama, dance and singing; a city farm project where students are given the opportunity to manage the day-to-day running of a farm, gaining qualifications in animal care, and land based studies; and a 'Food for Thought' project where students grow fruit and vegetables and use their enterprise skills to market and sell the produce. Provision for personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is effective as these aspects are woven throughout the curriculum. Students learn about aspects such as working as part of a group, understanding personal identity and rights and responsibilities. This does much to promote their self-esteem and confidence and prepares them well for future education or employment. The school is effective in re-engaging students in their learning and many take up post-16 courses at the end of Year 11 in order to further develop their skills. Post-16 students provide good role models for younger students and several have become volunteers once they have left the school. Students receive appropriate careers advice and guidance and some former students have now been employed as members of staff, for example, on the farm.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Students join the school from a wide range of educational settings and remain on the roll of their mainstream schools. They attend Prism Independent School for several sessions each week. Students make satisfactory progress overall but some students make good progress, particularly in vocational subjects. Provision is not yet good because the quality of teaching is variable across the school and practice and strategies are not yet fully embedded. Staff know the students well and lessons are planned to ensure progression in learning. However, in some lessons, work is not always matched closely enough to the individual needs of students and 'next steps' in learning for individuals are not always identified. Marking does not always identify what students need to do next to improve their work. Teaching does take account of students' preferred learning styles with many opportunities to participate in practical activities. Behaviour is mainly managed effectively but occasionally there is some disruption which can affect students' learning. A strength of the teaching is that there are good relationships between staff and students and as a result, students are motivated to learn. Adults are deployed effectively to support students often on a one-to-one basis, but occasionally, in a few lessons, opportunities to promote independent learning skills are more limited.

The school carries out a baseline assessment and there is an appropriate framework in place that includes thorough induction procedures and regular assessments of

students' progress and behaviour. School tracking data and students' work show that most students make at least satisfactory progress in their learning from their starting points on entry to the school.

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

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students join the school often having had negative and disrupted experiences of education previously. The school successfully re-engages them in learning and staff quickly gain the students' trust enabling them to feel safe and secure. Staff are patient and tolerant and show that they care about the students which does much to help students develop positive attitudes to learning and to improve their behaviour. Students enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their improved attendance, which is broadly average. Students have a good awareness of the different types of bullying and are sure that any incidents will promptly be resolved by staff. Students have a very good understanding of faiths and cultures different to their own and this does much to promote harmony and understanding. This was shown during a GCSE religious education lesson where students demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of world religions. Students are keen to take on responsibilities and have been involved in a range of activities such as developing the provision for a multi-media project, creating a duck pond and animal house and developing a sensory garden. Students cooperate very well together on practical activities and older students help the younger ones. The students gain a good knowledge of public institutions and services in England as they learn about elections and government, have links with the Lord Mayor, who was present at the launch of the recording studio, and through links with police and fire service personnel. The school provides training placements for criminology students, social care students and trainee police officers and this enables students from the school to learn about different aspects of work and become aware of opportunities for further study.

The behaviour of students is satisfactory. They are making strides in managing their anger and their behaviour is managed well by staff. Weekly reports are written on students' behaviour and discussed at team meetings. Students are graded on their punctuality, participation in activities, team work, behaviour and effort. Students' comments on their achievements are valued by staff and future actions are identified to help them improve.

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

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. All the required policies and procedures are in place to promote the safety and well-being of students. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out, particularly those for educational visits and to ensure safety in the different settings. Students are closely supervised at all times and are taught to be aware of potential hazards, for example, in ensuring high levels of hygiene when working on the farm or when using tools and equipment. Fire risk assessments and a fire plan are in place and regular checks are carried out on fire equipment and emergency lighting systems. Records are also kept of practice

evacuations. All staff receive training in first aid and procedures are rigorous. All required safeguarding training is up to date, including enhanced training for the designated persons and some staff have undertaken safer recruitment training.

Students say they feel safe in the school and know that adults take prompt action if any incidents are reported. Students are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles, through the opportunities to grow their own fruit and vegetables and use them to cook their own lunches and through numerous opportunities to participate in sport and exercise. Students are offered one-to-one health support and access to expertise on a wide range of health related topics, such as increasing their knowledge of drug awareness or through the 'Borrow a Baby in Educational Settings' (BABIES) project. This is a 10 week accredited programme, culminating in a residential experience using 'Real Care Babies' to help reduce the risk of teenage pregnancy.

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

There are thorough procedures in place for the vetting and appointment of staff and others and the arrangements meet all requirements. All the required checks, including those by the Criminal Records Bureau, are carried out and recorded appropriately on a single central register.

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

The provision is on three sites. The main site includes six classrooms, a sports hall, music recording studio, indoor relaxation area and outdoor sports area. The accommodation at the city farm includes four classrooms, a purpose-built animal house, a number of outbuildings which are suitable for teaching horticultural and gardening skills, an indoor relaxation area, an outdoor sheltered area for livestock and a small woodland area. Provision at the Woodville centre includes two classrooms, a large greenhouse, a joinery workshop and several horticultural outbuildings. The three sites provide suitable educational facilities and accommodation to enable students to learn effectively and there is sufficient space for the number of students who attend.

### **Provision of information**

The school provides the required information for parents, carers and others in the school prospectus and the informative website. A new website has been created and recently launched. Parents, carers and placing agencies are provided with effective written reports about the progress of their children. There were no responses on Parent View for inspectors to consider, but a survey of the views of parents and carers was conducted by the Pupil Referral Unit and this showed that parents and carers had positive views of the school.

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

The school's complaints policy and procedures fully meet 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.

- Ensure that work is planned more precisely to meet the individual needs of students.
- Ensure that marking and feedback identify clearly what students need to do to improve their work.

## 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

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for pupils with BESD		
<b>Date school opened</b>	December 2011		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11-19		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 15	Girls: 6	Total: 21
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 35	Girls: 15	Total: 50
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 13	Girls: 2	Total: 15
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 5	Girls: 1	Total: 6
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£8,775		
<b>Address of school</b>	Walker Drive Girlington Bradford BD8 9ES		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01274 487633		
<b>Email address</b>	paul.craven@prismyouthproject.org		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Craven		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Prism Youth Project		

**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.**



11 October 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Prism Independent School, BD8 9ES**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and finding out how well you are learning. We would like to share with you what we found out about your school.

- We judged that Prism Independent School provides a satisfactory quality of education.
- The quality of teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory enabling you to make satisfactory progress and learn new skills.
- You say you enjoy school and feel safe while you are there.
- Staff look after you very well and you say that they will help you and support you when you need it.
- You have a good understanding of those from different faiths and cultures to your own and we were pleased to see the ways in which you help and support each other.
- Your behaviour is satisfactory and we know you are trying to improve.
- There are opportunities to learn a lot of new and different skills, such as construction, animal care, land-based studies and music and media work and you told us that you enjoy these opportunities.

All schools need to improve and in order to help you learn more we have asked the adults to plan work for you which closely meets your individual needs and to give you more advice on how you can improve your work. You can help by working hard and making sure you attend regularly and behave well so you can learn as much as you can.

Thank you for being so helpful during our visit. We wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Inkster  
Her Majesty's Inspector