

Brian Jackson College of Open Learning

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Joan Hewitt HMI

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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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

Brian Jackson College is an independent special school for students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is based in a modern facility in Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire. It is registered for up to 48 boys and girls aged 14 to 16. There are currently 24 students on roll, three of whom have a statement of special educational needs. The college is owned by the National Children's Centre charity. It works closely with the local authority to provide medium and long-term placements for students who have been excluded from their mainstream school. Additionally, the college provides temporary placements for students who have been temporarily excluded from local authority mainstream schools; there were no students attending under this arrangement at the time of this inspection.

The college works with its partner provider, Huddersfield Community Trust, in Huddersfield and with local providers for alternative provision for some students. The college aims to 'offer a fresh start with a new perspective' by offering an alternative education to students to help them obtain basic qualifications and skills. The current headteacher took up her appointment in September 2012. The college's previous full inspection took place in June 2009 and was followed by progress monitoring visits in March 2010 and November 2010.

Evaluation of the school

Brian Jackson College of Open Learning provides a satisfactory quality of education; the provision has improved since the last inspection and the college now meets all the requirements for continued registration as an independent school. There has been significant turbulence in leadership since the last inspection, with several changes of headteacher; the new headteacher has lost no time in implementing rapid improvements. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, and their behaviour overall is satisfactory. Teaching and assessment is satisfactory; teachers are committed and hardworking but do not always make effective use of progress information to plan lessons that meet students' individual needs. The welfare, health and safety of students, together with the arrangements for safeguarding, are satisfactory.

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

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

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory and has improved markedly since the previous inspection. The curriculum follows the National Curriculum and meets all requirements. Subjects include mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and sport which are taught by the college's partner, Huddersfield Community Trust, in Huddersfield. English and art are taught on site as discrete subjects. There is an appropriate emphasis on improving students' reading and writing skills. Students benefit from a well-organised personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme. This includes elements of religious education which supports students in understanding and developing a tolerance for other cultures and beliefs. The PSHCE programme, along with a daily session focused on students' social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL), provides valuable opportunities for students to learn strategies to deal with risk, including risks to health and how to stay safe.

Arrangements for providing science have improved since the last inspection. The work of a specialist tutor is complemented by detailed mapping of other scientific aspects across the curriculum. Students enjoy the opportunity for practical learning in woodworking skills, beauty therapy and food technology. This broader offer has helped the college to meet the needs, interests and aspirations of students who often struggle to engage with more academic subjects. This provision is augmented by a motorcycle maintenance course which is provided off-site. The college also is part of a collegiate arrangement which provides students with access to further courses. At present, no student is following any of these courses. The satisfactory curriculum and sound careers advice has resulted in the large majority of students successfully entering employment, further education and training when they leave the college.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. There is a proportion of good teaching. Teachers and support staff have sound strategies to manage students' behaviour. Learning is supported by the strong relationships teachers and teaching assistants have with their students. When students are finding it hard to engage with the work constructively, teachers are tenacious and skilful in finding ways to help them concentrate on their work. Teachers sometimes rely heavily on worksheets and this is not helping them to tailor tasks to the needs of individuals. Teaching is stronger in the college when teachers have high expectations. In these examples, teachers make sure that each student has appropriate work and they respond flexibly to capture students' interest and enthusiasm. For example, two Year 10 students were engaged and made good progress in designing T-shirts in an art lesson. This was because the teacher had made sure there were magazine clippings about trucks and fashion available which reflected the students' individual interests.

Students' progress is satisfactory. A new system of tracking students' progress is giving teachers helpful information but they do not use it effectively to make sure it meets each student's needs. When this happens students are not always working at the right level and do not have enough challenge. The college's focus on basic skills

has been successful in improving students' reading ages. The numbers of students successfully gaining a qualification in English and mathematics is also improving. Progress in mathematics is improving at a faster rate than it is in English.

Students' work is generally well presented. In some subjects, such as science, students have a good record of their achievements. Although the situation has improved this term, in some subjects there is less evidence of the progress students have made. Marking is helpful in celebrating what students have done well and picking out what they need to do next to improve their work.

The college is improving its work in making sure that the qualifications students gain are appropriate to their ability. Individual education plans are satisfactory and give teachers and other staff sound guidance about students' targets, and advice about effective approaches to support students. Teachers have also valued their training and they are keen to improve their practice. For example, following recent training, teachers now consistently make sure students know what they are learning and why at the start of each lesson.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Students are making steady gains in managing their behaviour because of the support they have from staff. Clear boundaries and the new rewards and sanctions system have resulted in better behaviour in lessons. This system also extends to the off-site provision where students are supported by college staff. Students usually settle down to work and respond well to staff. Behaviour is satisfactory; during break and lunch times it is usually good humoured but can sometimes be boisterous. Staff are helping students to be more reflective, not only about their work but also about day-to-day events, such as considering the rights and wrongs of a situation before responding. However, a few students still respond too quickly to real or perceived slights from other students. Students are not keen on the stricter boundaries the headteacher has implemented but recognise that behaviour is better. Records show that serious incidents of poor behaviour have reduced since the previous inspection. The college is improving the opportunities students have to develop responsibility, such as visiting the local shop and managing their timekeeping.

A programme of visits and visitors effectively supports students' cultural development and students respond well to these. For example, they have had opportunities to visit local churches and a Mosque. This complements the thorough work they do in PSHCE in promoting tolerance and harmony. Attendance has also improved since the previous inspection report but still remains low compared with the national picture. A few students are persistently absent and this results in slow progress. The local authority, students and parents and carers are supportive of the college. The headteacher has rapidly gained the support of the staff and the local authority. Students are becoming more involved in contributing to a positive environment. They relax and socialise well when they arrive in the mornings. The college makes effective use of games and music to promote a calm start to the day. Students are

respectful of each other's work. This can be seen clearly in the moving Remembrance Day display in the communal area which students have maintained in good condition.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The welfare, health and safety of students are satisfactory. The college provides a caring environment and staff are committed to putting students' safety first. Members of staff benefit from regular and appropriate training, and implement clear routines to ensure students' well-being. Students are supervised carefully and this helps to keep them safe. The college keeps detailed records and systems to safeguard students are thorough. Policies to promote health and safety on and off the site are reviewed regularly and implemented satisfactorily. The college has suitable procedures in place for the recruitment of staff. Training for child protection is up-to-date and the college puts sufficient emphasis on this when new members of staff take up their appointments. Risk assessments are detailed, especially for students' regular visits to Huddersfield Community Trust. The policies and procedures for behaviour and anti-bullying are clear and consistently implemented. Students say they feel safe and have no hesitation in saying who they would turn to if they needed help or support.

Liaison with outside agencies is well-managed. Members of staff work together in college to provide sound support for students in overcoming their significant behaviour difficulties so that they can learn effectively. The policy for first aid is appropriate and implemented well. The college has sufficient regard to fire safety and all the required checks are in place. The admission and attendance registers are kept in accordance with requirements.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All of the required checks, including Criminal Records Bureau checks, have been completed for staff and the proprietors. Records of these checks are kept in a single central record, which meets requirements.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The college is located in a modern building that is safe, well maintained and provides all the required facilities, including suitable washrooms. Classrooms are of a suitable size and they are appropriately equipped to support effective learning. There is a secure outdoor area for students to use. A well-equipped communal area supports students in improving social skills. There is a food technology room and access to a workshop for woodworking skills development. The college makes extensive use of its partner's premises which includes dedicated ICT suites, classrooms and a wide range of sports facilities. There is a large communal area which is used for a variety of activities, including the morning Breakfast Club and as an art classroom.

Provision of information

The college provides the required information through a prospectus, newsletter and policies. Reports to parents are detailed and explain clearly what students can do to improve their work.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The college has a clearly written complaints procedure which fully 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.

- Ensure that teachers use students' progress information consistently to plan tasks which are tailored closely to the interests and ability of individual students.
- Continue to improve students' attendance.
- Accelerate improvements in assessing students' progress and behaviour by ensuring that leaders and teachers have regular opportunities to share good practice.

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 day school for students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties		
Date school opened	October 2005		
Age range of pupils	14–16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 15	Girls: 9	Total: 24
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,550		
Address of school	Vision House Units 1-6 Grove Mills High Street Heckmondwike WF16 0AD		
Telephone number	01924 408306		
Email address	maria.kelly@nccuk.org.uk		
Headteacher	Maria Kelly		
Proprietor	National Children's Centre		

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.



10 December 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Brian Jackson College of Open Learning, Heckmondwike, WF16 0AD

Thank you for the welcome you gave me when I inspected your college recently. Talking to some of you, watching you learn and looking at your work was very helpful. I am pleased to report Brian Jackson College of Open Learning is improving and it is providing you with a satisfactory quality of education. These are some of the strengths of the college.

- More of you are going on to employment, further education or training when you leave at the end of Year 11.
- Your attendance is improving.
- Behaviour in lessons is usually calm.
- The curriculum has improved and you have a wider choice of subjects.
- The headteacher has made some important improvements in a short space of time.

All the adults in the college are keen to keep the improvements going so I have asked them to think about a few things that might help. They should use your progress information to ensure that the work you have is at the right level for each one of you and to make sure that it is interesting. They should continue to work with you to make sure you all attend college regularly. I have also suggested that they keep improvements in your behaviour and progress going at a quick rate by going to see how other colleges and teachers work so they can learn from the very best in the country.

You have an important job to do, too, in helping the college to improve. Please make sure that you work as hard as you can, behave well during break and lunch and attend college regularly.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt
Her Majesty's Inspector