

# Peak Education

The Old School House, Watling Street, Gailey, ST19 5PR

<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 March 2013	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### This school is good because

- It is confident about its purpose and sets out clear expectations of what it can achieve for placing authorities.
- The school's leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching is good and enables disaffected students to recognise that they can contribute and achieve.
- Students with limited recent success in education cooperate and achieve well in a range of relevant activities and tasks.
- Good attention is given to the welfare and safety of students both in the classroom and in outdoor activities.
- The school's leaders are aware of the next steps required to move the school forward and are actively pursuing these goals.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- The school has not been open long enough to demonstrate a sustained track record of success over time.
- Students do not have enough scientific learning experiences, including practical experiments.
- There is not sufficient focus on the development of writing skills, including the use of computers to produce extended items of work.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with half a day's notice.
- Three lessons were taught by two teachers during the inspection. These were all observed.
- Meetings were held with the head of education, and informally with one member of staff and four students. A number of school policy documents, examples of reports to parents, and samples of students' work were scrutinised.
- There were no responses from parents recorded on Parent View and no responses from students to the online survey.

## Inspection team

David Young, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a co-educational special day school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Ten students have statements of special educational needs.
- The school contracts with local authorities to teach an agreed range of subjects and experiences for students who are on the rolls of other local schools.
- There are 19 boys on roll, aged between 13 and 16 years, of whom 17 attend part-time, mostly for two or three days a week.
- The school specialises in alternative education and social development programmes for students who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from local schools.
- The school was first registered in March 2012 and this is its first full Ofsted inspection.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the range of scientific learning experiences within the curriculum.
- Evaluate the impact of absence on students' attainment and take steps, in consultation with students' base schools, to improve the attendance of persistent absentees.
- Increase the number of activities which require students to use computers to write text in extended paragraphs.
- Establish clear criteria for the assessment of regular classwork so that students understand the extent of their progress towards externally marked accreditation.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

**Good**

Students are making good progress with their academic learning. Much of their work is accredited under the National Open College Network award scheme but, in the short time the school has been open, no student has yet completed a full course for assessment. Evidence of completed work in students' portfolios demonstrates that a number are on track to achieve level 1 or 2 qualifications in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). This represents good progress from relatively low starting points due to difficulties experienced in their previous education. Students are making similarly good progress towards a level 1 award in life skills with a sports specialism. Witness statements in students' portfolios provide evidence that a number are progressing positively towards the award which will be accredited at the end of the academic year. In lessons observed during the inspection, there was evidence of good progress in the use of ICT for research and presentation of work. In addition, students demonstrate the ability to take an active part in lessons and to contribute thoughtfully to discussions on complex moral issues. Students' portfolios of work provide a suitable focus for regular review and discussion of their progress. The arrangements for feedback to students, parents and carers focus more on the extent and completion of work rather than a clear judgement about the quality of their work or what they need to do to improve.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

**Good**

Students' behaviour is good and shows significant improvement over time. Students admitted to the school have been excluded, or are at risk of exclusion, from previous schools. The school is successful in enabling students to recognise how their behaviour impacts on their learning, and the majority respond positively to the challenge to improve. The relationship between staff and students is relatively relaxed but absolutely clear about the standards of expected behaviour and cooperation. Students cooperate well within the classroom and are able to listen to and evaluate the oral contributions of others. It was not possible to observe students taking part in outdoor education but evidence from reports indicates that they also respond appropriately to the health and safety requirements of working in teams and in challenging environments. The majority of students are placed at the school on a part-time basis, but variable attendance restricts the extent of the progress of a minority.

There are good opportunities within the curriculum for students to learn about cultural diversity and they mostly present a positive response to differences in belief and lifestyles. For example, students contributed in a mature and balanced way to a discussion about how different religious perspectives influence attitudes to abortion. Despite their generally negative previous experiences, they demonstrate the confidence to share their work and to respond to questions from staff and fellow students. The curriculum also provides good opportunities for students to understand the legal system and the contribution made to society by a range of local and national services, the nature of democracy and how to respond to a variety of opinions.

### Quality of teaching

**Good**

The quality of teaching is good and enables students to make good progress in their learning. The staff have created an effective learning environment in the classroom and they respond appropriately to any individual distracting or disruptive behaviour. The staff encourage students to take part orally in lessons and to listen effectively to the contributions of others. Students are provided with good opportunities to use ICT for research and the presentation of their work. In one lesson observed, the students made individual PowerPoint presentations which resulted in extended discussion, good questioning by other students, and evidence that the students had learned from their individual research. The staff are skilled in using oral questions to help students

explain their ideas and to extend their understanding. Lessons are amended and adapted skilfully in response to legitimate contributions from students, resulting in students' confidence to take an active part. There is occasional over-use of the spoken word which is not always reinforced with visual images to focus attention and summarise learning. Students make good use of ICT but there is insufficient focus on the production of extended original text by students who are often content to provide limited records of their work. Similarly, there is insufficient focus on the legibility of handwriting as a practical tool for effective communication. The staff have a good understanding of the criteria for the external assessment of students' work and they review work regularly to identify aspects for further reinforcement of learning.

### **Quality of curriculum**

**Good**

The quality of the curriculum is good. The school negotiates an individual timetable for each student with the placing authority. The school's strengths and areas of expertise are made clear and the provision, including that for those with statements of special educational needs, is arranged to meet identified elements of each students' learning and personal development. The current Key Stage 4 students in full-time attendance do not have statements of special educational needs. The curriculum includes the core requirements for Key Stage 4 students, including English, mathematics, science, ICT and physical education, although the range of science modules is relatively limited. There is a strong emphasis on personal and social development throughout the variety of modules in the curriculum including for example, cooking, first aid, car maintenance, mountain biking or abseiling. A variety of enrichment activities extend students experiences, for example visits to museums, graffiti art, visits to the pottery barn, drumming and percussion. Activities both on- and off-site contribute effectively to students' personal development and this is a stated aim of the school. The quality of planning is good and based on systematic schemes of work which reflect the requirements of the various externally accredited modules of work.

### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

**Good**

Arrangements for students' welfare, health and safety are good; all the independent school regulations are met. The school has developed an appropriate set of policies and procedures to guide its work and these are implemented effectively. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students are good. The school has a firm commitment to the development of staff and training records, including child development training at the required levels, are monitored and kept up to date. Similarly there are appropriately trained staff for first aid available to support all activities. The school's training, particularly for off-site activities, is monitored and accredited by professional external agencies. All the required checks on the suitability of staff are completed and recorded diligently. Policies for the management of behaviour and the prevention of bullying are supported by proportionate sanctions and are implemented effectively. Risk assessments are completed for all required aspects of school life. Staff have a good understanding of the potential risks posed by individual students and these are taken into account in the planning of activities. There are suitable opportunities in the curriculum for students to consider various aspects of healthy lifestyles.

### **Leadership and management**

**Good**

The quality of leadership and management is good. The school has, in a relatively short time, established an appropriate balance between important aspects of academic education and practical learning experiences. Placing authorities have a good awareness of what the school can offer. This balance provides effective educational experiences for mostly part-time students who are re-engaged with education as a result. The small on-site staffing level places a large responsibility on the head of education. This responsibility is carried out successfully with commitment, vision and a calm approach to daily routines. The school meets all of the independent school standards; the staff have a good understanding of the strengths of the provision and have identified areas for further development. An early start has been made on the creation of a development plan to set

out priorities for improvement together with the strategies to implement these. The quality of information for parents and carers, including procedures for the management of any complaints, is good. The combination of the school prospectus and website provide access to extensive information and all required policy documents. The premises are suitable for the education of the number of students on roll and action has commenced to improve the internal appearance of the teaching and recreational spaces, and to enhance the learning resources.

## What inspection judgements mean

School provision		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137956
<b>Inspection number</b>	408683
<b>DfE registration number</b>	860/6039

This inspection was carried out 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special day school for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
<b>School status</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	19
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	17
<b>Proprietor</b>	Paul Ball
<b>Head of Education</b>	Andrew McCreedy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£45 per day
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 722226
<b>Fax number</b>	01782 720475
<b>Email address</b>	Andrew.mccreedy@peakpursuits.co.uk



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