

Advanced Education – Queens Park

C/O Advanced Education, Unit 2 Forrest Way, Gatewarth Industrial Estate, Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 1DF

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2013

Overall effectiveness

Adequate 3

Pupils' achievement	Adequate	3
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Adequate	3
Quality of teaching	Adequate	3
Quality of curriculum	Adequate	3
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

Summary of key findings

This school is adequate

- Staff work hard to ensure that students engage in education; this is often difficult to achieve. As a result, some students miss lessons or are hard to motivate. This impedes their achievement and progress.
- The school has good systems for managing students' behaviour. However, these are not always fully effective in controlling exceptionally challenging behaviour.
- Teachers plan well-paced lessons which are supported with a good range of resources and teaching methods. Despite this, some students remain disinterested and disengaged.
- Although the curriculum is broad and balanced and provides a good range of opportunities for students to succeed, not all students take full advantage of opportunities to learn and prepare for the future.
- Students complete baseline assessments when they join the school. However, systems to track progress throughout their time at school are not fully embedded.
- The school leaders' system for observing lessons is inconsistent and some opportunities to improve teaching, learning and students' achievement are missed.

The school has the following strengths

- The school places a strong focus on the personal development of students; social and moral development are an integral part of what the school provides.
- Leaders and managers support staff well.
- The curriculum is enriched with trips and activities that meet the needs and interests of students.
- Welfare, health and safety are good; staff provide very high levels of care.

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

- The inspection was carried out with a day's notice.
- The inspector observed two lessons taught by two teachers. The inspector looked at students' work and held meetings with the headteacher, lead tutor and staff.
- The inspector looked at the school's documentation including schemes of work, teachers' planning, records of students' progress, assessment records and records of the professional development of staff. He checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed in six questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Chanan Tomlin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a small special school that caters exclusively for looked after children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) aged from 10 to 18 years who have a history of unsuccessful placements elsewhere. Most students spend very short periods of time at the school. The school was registered in 2006.
- The school operates from an end-of-terrace house in a residential area. Currently, there are no students with a statement of special educational needs.
- Students are taught by a team of visiting teachers who cover several such schools in the area operated by the proprietors. The school's aim is to provide 'excellence, equality and high achievement for all, by unconditional positive regard for everyone.'
- The school was last inspected in January 2010; at that time there were no students on roll.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Identify more effective ways of getting all students to engage fully in education and to respond more positively to what is offered, to raise their levels of achievement.
- Establish better systems to manage behaviour when it is most challenging.
- Ensure that leaders and managers:
 - improve the quality of teaching and learning using a more consistent system of lesson observations
 - establish opportunities for teachers to share good practice
 - improve the overall effectiveness of the school by developing better systems for the tracking of students' progress over time
 - seek ways to improve rates of attendance.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Adequate

Achievement is adequate as teaching is only adequate. The school caters for students that are often very difficult to engage in learning. Many have not attended school for long periods of time; as a result, they do not appreciate the importance of education and distrust educational establishments. Staff encourage students to attend school and engage in lessons but do not always succeed. Students that are motivated and do engage, achieve well and make good progress. These students have achieved awards in Spanish speaking and listening skills, entry level qualifications in a good range of subjects and sports unit awards; all in short periods of time. All students take baseline assessments in core subjects when they start school. However, it is difficult to fully determine the achievement and progress of those that do not attend school regularly or do not fully engage in lessons regardless of their starting points.

In lessons, students quickly acquire knowledge and a secure understanding of the subjects that they are taught. They develop and apply a range of skills including those for reading, writing, communication and mathematics. The school's aim is to prepare and equip students for reintegration into mainstream education; first to one of the larger schools attached to the company and then into a mainstream school. Those that attend consistently and take an interest in education are well prepared for the next stage in their education and succeed in further placements.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Adequate

Behaviour and personal development is adequate. Apart from the rare occasions when students exhibit extremely challenging behaviour, behaviour in and around school is adequate. However, despite the efforts of staff to encourage students to attend lessons, some students have a poor attitude to learning, refuse to comply and end up wasting time. When they do attend, lessons are often adapted to address their moods and whether they decide to engage or not. For example, during a drama lesson, students interacted well with teachers, took an interest in the subject, learned important skills and were achieving well. During another lesson, students refused to engage and made little progress.

Students learn about different forms of bullying and the harm that bullying causes. They also learn about acceptable social behaviour and how to control anger through personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and through discussions with school and care staff. However, opportunities for socialising and maintaining friendships are limited; students therefore have few opportunities to apply their knowledge about bullying and social interaction in practical ways. Supervision and levels of care are very good and students feel safe at school; they get along well with staff, appear happy and welcome visitors to the school. Attendance and punctuality fluctuate from below to above average depending on the circumstances; they usually improve as students acclimatize to the school surroundings and timetable. Staff develop good supportive relationships with students and incidents of aggressive behaviour are not common.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is adequate. The curriculum and provision in these areas is good. However, effective implementation is often dependent on how engaged and interested students are. Students learn about spirituality through music, drama, religious education (RE) and through trips to places of worship and natural beauty. They learn about other cultures through religious education, history and geography and receive important information about multicultural Britain aimed at promoting tolerance and mutual respect. They improve in self-confidence as they assert themselves during discussions and debates with their

teachers and through charity work. Students learn about morality through PSHE, citizenship and valuable exchanges with teachers and care staff. They are guided well and are taught to respect others' needs and interests. Students are encouraged to develop attitudes that will enable them to make a positive contribution to society. During citizenship lessons, they are offered balanced presentations of opposing political views.

Quality of teaching**Adequate**

Teaching is adequate and leads to adequate achievement overall. Teachers plan lessons well and are keen for students to achieve and make good progress. Lessons are often well-paced and supported with a good range of activities and resources. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are skilled at reshaping tasks and explanations according to students' responses during lessons. However, teachers and school leaders have not identified fully effective ways of improving attendance and the engagement of students in lessons. As a result, disaffected students that are hard to engage in learning do not consistently respond well to the efforts of their teachers and their achievement and progress overall are only adequate. Teachers are very patient and usually manage very challenging behaviour effectively.

Teachers focus on developing students' reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills effectively; students that engage achieve well and make good progress in these areas. Teachers assess learning and progress regularly; assessment records form the basis of individual learning plans for all students. Lesson plans fully reflect individual learning plans and indicate that lessons are well-suited to the needs and abilities of each student. However, systems for tracking the progress of students over time, throughout their time at school are not fully embedded.

Quality of curriculum**Adequate**

The curriculum is adequate and leads to adequate achievement overall. The written curriculum is broad, balanced and well-organised. It is supported with detailed schemes of work and with planning for a progression in learning. However implementation of the curriculum depends often on the degree of engagement of learners. Some students are disinterested and do not take full advantage of what is provided for them; these students make only adequate progress. Students of varying aptitudes and abilities that do engage have plenty of opportunities to make good progress and to gain qualifications that will help them in their future lives.

The curriculum provides good opportunities for students to develop skills and make progress in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. It is enriched with a good variety of activities and trips that are designed to stimulate students' interest and to provide them with experiences that they can apply and relate to different aspects of their education. These include visits to museums, galleries, theatres and places of historical interest. Students are well-prepared for their future economic well-being through a strong focus on English, mathematics and through citizenship. An education liaison tutor provides valuable careers advice. Curricular provision for PSHE is good but, as with other subjects, its effective implementation depends on the extent of student engagement.

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

Welfare, health and safety are good. Staff are highly committed to ensuring that students are well-cared for and are competent in promoting their health and safety. Arrangements for safeguarding

are robust and reviewed regularly. A child protection policy is implemented effectively; staff have been trained appropriately at the required levels and intervals and are fully aware of the procedures that ensure that students are kept safe. The school has good regard for the safe recruitment of staff; all required checks are conducted and recorded in a single central record. Risk assessments for individual students ensure that they are well supported and cared for. Risk assessments for the premises, activities and school trips are carefully attended to. Supervision is consistently good. The school has good systems to deal with anti-social behaviour and bullying and arrangements to promote good, courteous behaviour are usually effective.

The school's policies and procedures to ensure that students are protected and well-supported, including those for first aid, are comprehensive and regularly reviewed. A qualified first aider is always on hand in case of emergencies. Students learn about healthy lifestyles through PSHE and science. They learn about keeping fit during physical education (PE) lessons that take place at local gymnasiums and leisure centres. As a result, students are keen to keep healthy and to avoid dangerous habits. The school works well with parents, carers and external agencies to ensure that students are kept safe. The school has a good level of fire safety; fire risk assessments are conducted regularly, all equipment is checked on a regular basis and regular fire drills are duly recorded. All of the regulations are met for this standard.

Leadership and management

Adequate

Leadership and management is adequate. Senior leaders and managers consistently communicate high expectations and ambition; the proprietor challenges school leaders to improve the provision and outcomes for students. Staff and resources are deployed well for the benefit of all students. However, leaders and managers have not identified effective ways to improve the quality of teaching in order to secure the involvement of all students, for example, through a more consistent system of lesson observations or by establishing more opportunities for teachers to share good practice. As a result, some students' achievement and progress are only adequate because they do not attend school or engage in lessons regularly.

Leaders and managers appreciate the importance of self-evaluation as a vehicle to identify weaknesses and secure improvement. They work well with parents, carers and external agencies to secure benefits for students. They have developed policies that promote progress in all subjects and skill areas such as literacy. The school's curriculum and its provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is well-organised. The school's ethos promotes positive behaviour and good personal development. However, the full implementation of plans and policies is limited because the students that do not engage well with learning do not achieve enough and do not make good progress.

The premises and accommodation consist of a conservatory that is used as a classroom, a kitchen area, a lounge and a small garden that students use during breaks. All areas of the school are well-maintained and adequately support the curriculum. The school meets all of the requirements related to the provision of information to parents and carers, and the complaints procedure includes all of the required details. The proprietor and school managers have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
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

Unique reference number	131390
Inspection number	420219
DfE registration number	354/6019

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.

Type of school	School for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD)
School status	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	10–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Advanced Childcare
Chair	Mr Riz Khan
Headteacher	Mr Tariq Verpalen
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2010

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