

Eden Park Academy

119 Warwick Road, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 1JZ

Inspection dates	11–13 September 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
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	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Following periods of great disruption to their schooling most students arrive here with educational standards much lower than those expected nationally. Nevertheless, through the good teaching they rapidly make up lost ground in their learning, particularly in English and mathematics, and achieve well.
- Students make great gains in their personal development. They enjoy school, attend regularly, join in with lessons and behave well.
- Students are very well looked after by the staff so that the care and guidance provided to them is outstanding, as are the arrangements for their welfare and protection.
- Through good leadership and management since her appointment 18 months ago, the headteacher has successfully improved the quality of teaching and broadened the range of opportunities for students to succeed in their learning.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The information systems at work within the school are not sufficiently well developed to support teachers in their planning and recording of students' very small steps in learning.
- The targets for learning set for students in lessons are generally too broad so students are not always exactly sure how to make the best progress.
- The curriculum has not yet been fully implemented to provide the intended range of exciting opportunities for students to learn and make the maximum possible progress.

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) (Amendments) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection occurred with one day's notice. The inspector had meetings with staff and visitors to the school, including a policewoman and a local vicar.
- The inspector spoke with students and observed them in lessons, spending around three hours in classes. Five teachers were observed teaching in four lessons during the inspection. Students' work was examined together with the records of their achievements held by the school.
- Staff views were gained through discussions and by examining their questionnaires. There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to make an evaluation.
- Documents, policies and records concerning the management of the school were studied.

Inspection team

Terry McKenzie, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This small day special school is located in a large terraced house in Carlisle and caters for boys and girls aged from 11 to 16 years who are in residence with the company that owns it.
- Students often arrive here at very short notice with a history of disruption to their schooling. The school is registered to admit students who may or may not have a statement of special educational needs regarding behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD).
- Currently, there are 10 students on roll, none of whom have a statement of special educational needs. All have experienced prolonged disruption to their learning through behavioural, emotional and social difficulties in previous educational settings.
- The school sets out to help students regain their self-esteem and self-confidence so that they will attend school regularly, successfully take part in lessons and eventually gain qualifications to help them move on.
- Facilities owned by a local academy high school are utilised for the provision of physical education. Year 11 students attend an alternative educational provision run by the local authority which provides a mix of vocational and academic courses that supplement their learning in the school. At the time of the inspection, this had not yet begun to operate for this term and was therefore not visited.
- Ofsted last inspected the school in February 2010 and an inspector visited the school in 2012 following a request by the company to increase the numbers of students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The headteacher and company managers must ensure that students can always make and demonstrate the maximum possible progress in their lessons by:
 - directing teachers to provide students with targets for learning in lessons that specify very small steps
 - providing teachers with better systems for recording the very small steps of learning that students make
 - continuing to fully implement the wide range of learning opportunities offered inside and outside of school.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students' standards on entry to the school are low compared with national averages because of the great disruption to their education that has occurred in the past. However, the headteacher and staff are successful in quickly gaining the trust of students and encouraging them to attend school regularly to take part in education. Consequently, following their enrolment, students rapidly settle into school routines. Their achievement is good because the quality of teaching and the curriculum are good. All groups of students make rapid gains in English and mathematics because teachers skilfully incorporate these into all lessons throughout the curriculum. For example, in a design and technology lesson observed, the teacher successfully encouraged a student to undertake important aspects of reading and number work through being motivated by the practical activity.

The early successes in learning help students to re-establish the confidence required to increasingly take part in education. Their self-esteem grows. Older students undertake functional skills and GCSE courses. The qualifications gained are usually at a lower level than would be expected nationally but nevertheless demonstrate good progress from students' low starting points. Students' work folders show that they take a pride in their achievements, completing tasks in lessons and demonstrating accurate literacy and numeracy skills. Students report that they enjoy school. They are proud of it and appreciate the efforts of staff in helping them to learn and make progress in lessons.

The information held by the school indicates that almost all students make rapid progress in their learning following enrolment. This levels off after a while but they continue to make up lost ground and begin to catch up with their peers in mainstream schools. Generally, progress in all subjects throughout both key stages of the school is in line with, or better than, national expectations.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

The school is extremely successful in encouraging students to return to full-time education following periods of prolonged absence from previous educational settings. As a result, they make good gains in their personal development through improving their self-confidence and self-esteem. For some, these improvements represent outstanding development. Students learn to trust the adults with whom they work in school and this is instrumental in helping them to overcome their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties so that they can take part in learning. Almost all attend very regularly and are proud to wear their school uniform. They are punctual to lessons so that little time is wasted throughout the school day. Students' attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons and around the school are generally good and sometimes outstanding. Reports from the alternative education provider last year indicate that students behaved well there. A member of the police force who visits the school regularly to work with students praised the improvement that they make in their behaviour over time. When the standard of behaviour slips it is usually because the pace in lessons has dropped or students do not have enough to do.

Serious incidents are rare because of the robust behaviour management systems introduced by the headteacher since the last inspection. Staff are trained to help students manage their own behaviour so that they are able to make rapid improvement from when they join the school, particularly by avoiding confrontations that would otherwise get in the way of their learning. As they spend more time in the school, students become keen to please staff because of the strong and positive relationships that they develop with them. When questioned by the inspector, one student responded: 'This is the best school I have had - it is ten times better here!'

The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The

opportunities provided for students to learn and study outside of school ensure they regularly come into contact with others. Trips and visits are undertaken to places of interest, such as centres of worship and culture. Much is done to prepare them for living in a multicultural society. Through studying personal, social, health education and citizenship students learn about the public institutions and services in England, the different forms of bullying and how to keep themselves safe. The company has recently taken steps to ensure that political and religious extremism will not be tolerated and that balanced views must always be presented to students in lessons.

Quality of teaching

Good

Teaching is at least good. Some is outstanding. Consequently, students achieve well in most lessons and come to enjoy being educated. Most teachers encourage students to demonstrate the correct use of literacy and numeracy skills in their lessons and throughout the curriculum. Consequently, students make rapid gains in English and mathematics, making up for the previously lost ground in their education. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly for what will be done in the class. In the most effective lessons, teachers systematically identify the very small steps that students need to take in their learning. Such practice is not consistent and, consequently, the targets set for students are not always as clear as they could be. As a result, students do not always demonstrate the maximum possible gains.

Teachers mark and assess work regularly, providing good feedback during lessons to students. However, although the regulations for teaching and assessment are met, the systems for gathering the information about students' progress in school are not yet capable of enabling teachers to record the very small steps of students' achievements on a lesson-by-lesson basis. Consequently, there are insufficient opportunities for teachers to use assessment information as effectively as they could when planning the next round of lessons.

Teachers support students well during lessons. Students receive almost individual attention because classes are so small and they benefit from the excellent care and support that they receive. However, staff are careful not to do too much for them and plenty of opportunities are provided for individual work and cooperation in very small groups. On the rare occasions when teaching assistants are employed during lessons they are directed well so that their support to students is effective.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The good curriculum already provides plenty of opportunities inside and outside of school for students to learn and make good progress in their studies; and much has been done by the headteacher since her appointment to improve the learning opportunities for students further. For example, the school maintains a strong emphasis on helping students to develop the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. To extend the curriculum, imaginative courses are being provided through, for example, the use of alternative educational provision operated by the local authority. Also, the headteacher has arranged for students to have access to high quality facilities at another school for physical education. These facilities have also been used for school council meetings and to provide venues for personal, social, health education and citizenship. Students report that they find these facilities and the associated curriculum activities motivating. Where it is appropriate to do so students undertake work experience, sometimes operating throughout extended periods.

The curriculum includes all the required areas of learning for an independent school. At Key Stage 3, it is founded on the National Curriculum. In the past, when there have been students with a statement of special educational needs, the curriculum has been appropriate to their needs. For all students the curriculum is personalised and the school ensures that, where students have particular interests, these can be incorporated into their studies. This is motivating for students and instrumental in helping them return to full-time education. Students in Key Stage 4 have a wide range of options to choose from but all are encouraged to gain nationally recognised

qualifications in English, mathematics and science so that they are prepared well for moving on to the next stages of their lives.

School staff place great emphasis on the development of students' reading and writing, with their progress in reading and spelling tracked regularly. The school liaises with students' homes to support the care staff in encouraging students to read outside of school. Each student has opportunities in school and through the support of residential staff to undertake a wide range of additional activities. For example, after-school clubs have been provided for football and other physical activities. A recent partnership with a church in the city has opened up opportunities for students to take part in environmental work with young people from other different backgrounds.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

Outstanding arrangements are in place for students' welfare, health and safety so that they are thoroughly safeguarded in school and when away from the school site. The required policies and procedures concerning students' welfare, health and safety are exemplary, comply with the regulations and are regularly reviewed by the company. High standards of recruitment are maintained with all of the required checks being made on suitability of prospective staff, including through the maintenance of a single central record of the checks undertaken. Agency staff are not employed but the school is aware of the procedures to be followed should this change. All staff are trained appropriately in child protection and the headteacher, who is the designated person for safeguarding, has undertaken higher levels of training. A feature of the outstanding safeguarding practice of school is the close liaison with the residential managers of the company. Since her appointment, the headteacher has ensured that excellent relationships are maintained between the company and the local authority safeguarding board.

Staff and students are clear about reporting concerns to the designated person. The school teaches students how to keep themselves safe through sex and relationships education, and through learning about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated and are consequently rare. Clear guidance is provided to staff through the prevention of bullying policy that describes clearly the different forms of bullying and how to deal with it. The arrangements for the health and safety of students are supported by high quality risk assessments that describe the arrangements for practical work and physical education in school, and for off-site visits. The required arrangements for first aid, fire safety and the maintenance of fire fighting equipment are in place. Regular practice evacuations are undertaken so that staff and students know what to do in the event of an emergency and these are correctly recorded.

Leadership and management

Good

The good leadership and management of the headteacher and company managers have ensured that all the regulations for independent schools are met. Since her appointment the headteacher has introduced work that is designed to help her understand how well the school is performing and, as a result, she has been effective in improving the school. For example, the quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education has significantly improved since the last inspection. The headteacher has implemented robust systems for managing teachers' performance and this has led to general improvements in the quality of lessons. For example, through appraisal teachers are required to demonstrate their competency in accordance with the nationally recognised Teachers' Standards. The headteacher has introduced new ways of measuring students' educational standards when they enter the school and she regularly reviews their progress to ensure that they are learning efficiently and steadily. Recent innovations have ensured that teachers develop their professional skills, and some unqualified staff are training as teachers and gaining the necessary qualifications.

Since the last inspection much has been done to ensure that the school has positive partnerships with others in the local area so that students have a wider range of opportunities to learn outside

of school and contribute to the local community through study, work experience and charity work. Good working relationships between the school and the students' residences have been established. The headteacher maintains questionnaires and correspondence that indicate the good work of the school is recognised by parents and carers, local authorities who place the students here and other partners, such as local schools.

Improvements to the curriculum in the last year have contributed to the good gains that students make in their personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The implementation of better behaviour management practices has resulted in there being fewer serious incidents in school. The premises and accommodation, including the facilities at a local academy school, are entirely suitable for the education provided to students. The school provides all of the required information for parents, carers and others, including that in respect of any students with a statement of special educational needs. The procedure for handling complaints fully complies with the regulations.

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	132112
Inspection number	420186
DfE registration number	909/6050

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	Independent special day school
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Radical Services
Chair	Luiz Guilherme
Headteacher	Kerry Maynard
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£32,000
Telephone number	01228 631770
Fax number	N/A
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