

Future Education

168b Motum Road, Norwich, NR5 8EG

Inspection dates	19–21 November 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Adequate	3
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

- The majority of students make or exceed the expected rate of progress from their relatively low starting points during their two years at the school. Almost all achieve external qualifications in GCSE, BTEC or functional skills courses.
- The quality of teaching is good as a result of careful planning, staff enthusiasm and the ability to communicate in ways which motivate students.
- The patient and sensitive management of students by staff enables them to engage in lessons and to improve their attitudes to learning.
- The school pays good attention to the safety and welfare of students and provides a secure environment for effective learning.
- The school's leaders and managers review the work of the school effectively and have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and students' achievements.

It is not yet outstanding because

- While students make adequate progress with improvements to their behaviour, not all take sufficient, independent responsibility for their own actions and attendance.
- A small number of students do not make a successful transfer to employment, further education or training.
- Procedures for evaluating students' improvements in learning and behaviour do not provide sufficient information about the extent of their progress over time compared with national expectations.

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 one day's notice. Eight lessons were observed, taught by four members of staff, and including all teaching groups. Five lessons were jointly observed with the school Principal.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, the Chief Executive Officer of the charitable project, the deputy headteacher, and a group of students. Informal discussions took place with a number of members of staff and students. Questionnaires submitted by 13 members of staff were considered.
- A variety of school documents were scrutinised, including policy documents, teachers' planning, students' work, and data related to students' achievements, attendance and behaviour.
- There were insufficient responses to the online 'Parent View' questionnaire for these to be evaluated.

Inspection team

David Young, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Future Education is a co-educational day special school operated by the charity 'Future Projects' in the North Earham, Larkman and Marlpit area of Norwich.
- The school is registered to admit up to 28 students in the age range 14 to 16 years and there are currently 23 students on roll.
- All students are placed and funded by Norfolk County Council and all have learning needs associated with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Twelve students have a statement of special educational needs.
- Students typically have a history of poor attendance, non-attendance or exclusion from their previous schools. They often have contact with local youth offending teams and agencies providing support for drug or alcohol misuse.
- The school philosophy is to 'offer a holistic and supportive educational programme to Year 10 and 11 students which incorporates both curriculum and non-curriculum subjects and which in turn will help to improve both the educational achievements and the life chances of students.'
- The school makes use of the facilities of the on-site 'Future Radio' project, and off-site local amenities for physical education and sports.
- The school was last inspected in June 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all lesson plans identify intended learning outcomes for students in addition to the content and activities to be covered.
- Reduce the number of students not entering further education, employment or training on leaving Future Education.
- Provide training for all staff in order to develop a systematic and consistent approach to:
 - evaluating the extent of students' progress with their learning over time
 - assessing and recording the extent of individual students' personal development over time.
- Provide more comprehensive opportunities for students to understand and respect the diversity of cultures and beliefs present in the local and national communities.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students' achievement is good as a result of a good curriculum and good teaching. The attainment of students on entry to the school is below national expectations for their age. As a result of significant disruptions in their previous educational experience, students typically enter with attainment levels in English and mathematics which are at least three years below average. Overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 remains below average. However, the proportion of students making or exceeding expected rates of progress is above the national average. As a result, students leave the school with a range of qualifications at Levels 1 and 2 of the national qualifications framework, including a small number of higher grade GCSE results. There has been a steady increase in the number and levels of externally accredited awards over the last three years. Students in the current Year 11 are on track to achieve GCSE English, mathematics and science, together with BTEC level 2 awards in information technology, art and design, and cooking.

The majority of students make good progress in English and mathematics and achieve qualifications which enable them to progress to colleges of further education. About one third of the students take part in an additional literacy programme which successfully accelerates their rates of progress with their reading and spelling. Those students who have statements of special educational needs make progress at a similar rate to their peers. A small number of students do not continue into further education, employment or training, mostly as a result of poor attendance during Key Stage 4 and their unwillingness to take advantage of the good quality of education available.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Adequate

Students make adequate progress overall in managing their behaviour and overcoming obstacles to effective learning. A number make good progress with a strong positive impact on their achievement across a range of subjects. All members of staff demonstrate patience and sensitivity in responding to the personal needs and issues presented by individual students. The students identify these features as very significant in enabling them to manage their frustration and anger. They state that, while staff do not 'let them get away with things', they do not over-react or disrespect students' individuality. Incidents of poor behaviour do occur and are handled effectively, with appropriate sanctions where necessary, to ensure that any negative impact on the learning of others is minimised. A minority of students do not take sufficient responsibility for their inappropriate behaviour and are slow to acknowledge the trust placed in them to act independently. Students recognise that there is occasional bullying but state that they are assisted to develop strategies to improve their self-awareness and to manage their behaviour more appropriately. The school does not have systematic procedures in place to evaluate and record the extent of individual students' progress with specific behaviour characteristics over time. This hinders staff in devising consistent strategies to help students overcome their personal weaknesses.

The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral and social development of students. Students become self-aware and develop significant self-esteem and confidence during their time at the school. Incidents do sometimes distract from learning and fixed-term exclusions are used appropriately but permanent exclusion is rare. There is good provision for the development of students' awareness and understanding of personal relationships, the risks of substance abuse, and the development of healthy lifestyles. However, as at the time of the previous inspection, the school has limited success with the reduction of smoking. Overall attendance is below the national average, due mainly to a small number of persistent absentees. The attendance of the majority is at or above the national average and this, for many, represents a big improvement on their previous rates of attendance. There are a number of well-planned elements in the personal, social

and health education (PSHE) programme. These include effective use of external speakers covering, for example, aspects of the legal system and public services in Britain, together with relevant themes dealing with personal and social responsibility and the work of various external agencies. The school ensures that balanced views are presented when dealing with any controversial political or personal issues. Students state that they have limited opportunities to study diverse cultures and belief systems and the impact of these on the lifestyles of individuals and communities.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good and enables students to make good progress with their learning and achievement. The teaching of GCSE and BTEC subjects, PSHE, and physical education and sports is led by a suitable combination of qualified teachers and tutors. All contribute specialist subject knowledge and appropriate experience of working with young people with challenging behaviours. Additional support for individuals and groups of students is provided by learning support assistants who work effectively with teaching staff, often contributing positively to the teaching. Students value the mix of adults working alongside them and state that they feel supported, challenged and encouraged to give of their best. The planning of lessons is based on the specifications provided by the examination awarding bodies and work is pitched at the correct level to engage and challenge students. Teachers' lesson objectives sometimes focus on things to do or tasks to be completed without sufficient clarity about what students are expected to understand and learn as a result. In the best lessons, students are engaged by the enthusiasm of staff, the variety of visual materials used to enhance learning, and appropriate practical or thought-provoking activities.

A strength in much of the teaching is the way that teachers ensure that each student covers sufficient work at an appropriate level to match their individual learning needs. Lessons proceed at a good pace and all students are encouraged to take an active part, for example through contributing to discussion or demonstrating their work to the class. Students are provided with good opportunities to work independently and to take responsibility for how well they manage their work. Individual students occasionally attempt to distract others or are unwilling to take part in planned activities. However, the staff have devised and implement effective strategies to ensure that learning for the majority is not disrupted. Students' work is assessed against the requirements of the examination courses studied and students value the written and verbal feedback which lets them know how well they are doing. Although staff have a clear understanding of the current levels at which students are working, the school's assessment methods do not focus sufficiently on whether the rate and extent of students' progress over time is in line with national expectations from their various starting levels.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The quality of the curriculum is good and enables students to achieve success in a number of subjects at the levels of which they are capable. The main strength of the curriculum is that it focuses on academic learning and enables students to catch up with knowledge missed as a result of previous disrupted experiences. The curriculum provides a suitable range of subjects and activities for students to achieve well and prepares them for life after school. All the required areas of learning are included and there is a good emphasis on the development of skills in the core subjects. All students have regular lessons in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Sufficient time is allocated to the study of these subjects to enable success to be achieved in externally accredited examinations. BTEC courses are also used effectively to provide practical learning in subjects which students enjoy and appreciate.

Within all subjects, the staff provide opportunities for study at a range of levels, including functional skills at Levels 1 and 2, as well as GCSE and Level 2 BTEC qualifications. The school makes good use of the music and recording facilities available on site through the 'Future Radio'

project. An effective programme of PSHE, together with tutorial arrangements, underpins students' readiness to learn as well as introducing them to themes and areas of study relevant to their current and future lives. A suitable range of sports and off-site activities is also provided, including the use of special events to reward good attendance and behaviour. Students state that they are being prepared well for the future across a range of suitable subjects.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good and all the required regulations are met. Students are provided with a safe environment for learning, supported well by staff who are diligent in fulfilling their responsibilities. The staff, working closely with the trustees, have devised a suitable range of policies which are kept under regular review. Policies for the management of behaviour, the prevention of bullying, and the assessment of risk are implemented effectively. Students state that they feel safe in school and that they trust the support and supervision provided by the staff. Suitable records are maintained of any incidents and the sanctions applied, together with appropriate arrangements for the recording and monitoring of students' attendance. Strong links with the central administration of 'Future Projects' provide effective support, for example with the implementation of fire safety routines. Safety is taken seriously and regular reviews of risk assessments of the premises, together with timely and systematic checks on fire safety equipment, contribute to a safe environment for learning.

The school has implemented, and maintains effective arrangements for the safeguarding of students. Checks on the suitability of staff are comprehensive and entered into the required single central register. All members of staff are trained to the required levels in first aid, fire safety and child protection, including the designated lead person for safeguarding. The school provides a good quality of supervision and personal care for students, including timely intervention in family issues which may affect students' readiness to learn. Any safeguarding concerns are dealt with effectively, and the school has developed good working relationships with relevant local authority services and external agencies. There is an appropriate emphasis on healthy lifestyles in aspects of the curriculum and teaching, but this has limited impact on students' smoking.

Leadership and management

Good

The quality of leadership and management is good and has a strong impact on the quality of the curriculum, teaching, management of behaviour and students' achievement. The trustees and school leaders have ensured that all the regulatory requirements are met. The school has made a commitment to provide an academic curriculum which enables students address the gaps in their previous education, and it is successful in achieving this for the great majority of students. The staff demonstrate high expectations of what students can achieve, balanced with sensitive treatment and understanding of individuals. Students express positive views about the learning environment which has been created and all staff who completed an inspection questionnaire state that they are proud to work at the school.

A perceptive and accurate self-evaluation document has been produced by the Principal which provides a succinct analysis of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. The Chief Executive Officer of 'Future Projects' has an excellent awareness of the success of the school and an effective role in monitoring and evaluation. The recently created trustees' education sub-committee illustrates the good routines which have been put in place for the monitoring and review of policies and provision. The school evaluates what students have achieved by the end of Key Stage 4, but is less clear about how the extent of students' progress in their learning and behaviour compares with national expectations. The premises present a welcoming environment for learning and the trustees have ensured that all the premises and accommodation regulations are met. Suitable information is provided for parents and carers, through the school prospectus

and regular reports on students' progress, together with the development of close working relationships between home and school in often challenging circumstances. The complaints procedure is easy to understand and meets statutory requirements although there have been no complaints registered.

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	135859
Inspection number	422801
DfE registration number	926/6160

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	Day special school for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	14-16 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	23
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	The NR5 Project (Trading as Future Projects)
Chair	Michael Stonard
Principal	Dennis Freeman
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 June 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,700
Telephone number	01603 250505
Email address	d.freeman@futureprojects.org.uk

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