

Right Choice Project

First Floor, 1–4 Beresford Square, London, SE18 6BB

Inspection dates 18–20 March 2014

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	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Students, including those who are taught at home and in locations outside school, make good progress in their learning, including in English and mathematics.
- The behaviour of students improves considerably during the time they are associated with the school. The behaviour of almost all the students when they leave the school is good enough for them to take up places in local further education colleges.
- Staff pay careful attention to the needs of students with statements of special educational needs and ensure that the guidance in the statements is fully met.
- The teaching is good because it is flexible in responding to the students' educational and behavioural issues as they emerge.
- Leaders of the school have succeeded in their aim of 'giving students a second chance'. They have ensured good teaching and the good progress of students in the generally short time they are in the school. They liaise very successfully with the local authority, and with support professionals and parents and carers, and this also helps students achieve well.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Although the existing curriculum is good and a pilot GCSE has started this year, the school does not yet offer a reasonable range of GCSEs including English and mathematics.
- Students are not at the school long enough to achieve even better. The school is not provided with enough information on each student before they arrive and this delays the start of their education at the school.

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 school was given one day's notice of inspection.
- The inspector attended 10 lessons and activities, interviewed students, staff and parents, and reviewed the school's policies and procedures including those dealing with child protection.
- Because it was not possible for the inspector to visit students being educated in their homes or in more than one off-site location, he spoke with two representatives of the local authority who monitor the progress of these pupils.
- The views of six staff and six parents and carers expressed in written questionnaires were taken into account. There were too few responses on Ofsted's Parent View website to take into account.

Inspection team

Paul Armitage, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Right Choice Project is a mixed, independent day school for students with complex behavioural problems.
- The school is located in Woolwich, South London. It opened in 2003. It is registered for 30 students aged 13 to 18 years. There are currently 31 students on roll aged 12 to 16 years. Twenty four students are educated at the school premises; three are educated at home as part of the school's outreach programme, and four others are educated solely in off-site locations such as the local library. A few students are referred to Right Choice Project by other schools, but the vast majority are referred by the local authority. Most students are receiving multiple-agency support and their problems are long standing and profound.
- Ten students have statements of special educational needs, the main issue being behaviour linked to deeply-rooted social problems, as well as more specific issues such as autism, attention deficit and hyperactivity and school refusal.
- Most students are referred to the school when they are 15 or 16 years of age, but the majority of referrals are made during Year 11. Students' stay in the school ranges from a few weeks to two years. A small number attends for a short time under a scheme known as the Space Programme. This occurs when students are subject to fixed term exclusions from their main school. Others attend for several weeks while the local authority's Fair Access Panel decides where they should be educated.
- There are six permanent members of staff and five tutors and learning support assistants provided by agencies. There is also a number of specialists such as a psychotherapist, careers adviser, school nurse and sports coach who are employed by other bodies and who generally attend once a week. A small number of students have English as a second language and receive specialist support.
- The school uses a local park and sports centre for physical education (PE), games and general recreation.
- The school's aims are 'to ensure that our clients have a second chance to discover and realise their potential by providing a variety of services aimed at reducing social, emotional, psychological barriers to learning and achievement'.
- The school was last inspected in November 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In collaboration with the local authority:
 - seek to ensure that, where appropriate, students are placed for longer periods in the school to give them a better chance to achieve even more, academically and in their personal development
 - obtain more detailed information on each student before they come to the school so as to speed up their education.
- Based on the experience of the current pilot, increase the number of GCSEs available for students to study and ensure that this includes English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students' achievement is good. This is largely due to their improving interest in learning, as well as sensitive and determined teaching. Influenced by their behavioural difficulties, students are starting with very low levels of attainment. The good achievement is a considerable success given that about 60% of students join the school some way into Year 11. The school has to work fast to ensure that students obtain a qualification and that their behaviour improves sufficiently to enter further education.

Students achieve well in the functional skills qualifications in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Last academic year, 14 of the 16 students who were registered for the course completed it. Three students also did well in the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness awarded by ASDAN. This was the first year that the school offered the certificate and it was run as a pilot. This year, 23 students are undertaking the course, with a good number expected to achieve level 2. The students are especially competent in literacy.

Students with statements of special educational needs thrive well in the environment. Students in the small group studying English as a second language are also making good progress. Discussion with supervising representatives from the local authority, as well as reference to statement reviews, indicates that students educated at home are doing well. Those on short-term placements and those educated in off-site locations are also doing well.

Five students are undertaking a BTEC in hair and beauty and are making good progress. The students are keen to develop their skills and come to each lesson with a positive attitude. One bonus from the course is the way teachers use it to develop students' ability to communicate and behave in a professional way in a purpose-built salon.

While the school achieves success despite the majority of students joining the school during Year 11, this late joining is one reason why achievement is not outstanding. There is not enough time for students to do even better. The second reason why achievement is not outstanding is that very little information about a student's past academic achievement is provided for the school. As a result, time is lost while the student is assessed in order to decide to what courses they are best suited.

Another reason why achievement is not outstanding is that the school has not provided students with the opportunity to study GCSEs. It has now begun to provide them, despite the problems outlined in the previous paragraph. A very small number of students are taking advantage of the school's first GCSE in media studies which it is running on a pilot basis. Students are doing well, particularly in media production.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Students' behaviour and personal development are good overall. However, this judgement covers a considerable variation between students.

In general, when they join the school, the students' behaviour is inadequate and their personal development is poor. Their self-esteem and self-confidence are low. These are the reasons why they have been sent to the school. For those who have been at the school longer, there is a noticeable, rapid improvement in behaviour. Since many of the students are at the school for only a short period, this improvement is remarkable. A good example of the success of the school in this respect is the way that almost all the students go on to further education and settle in well. Parents and carers are exceptionally pleased with the improvement in behaviour and are pleased

that their child now wants to go to school. Students themselves recognise how the school has helped them improve. A number commented how their anger calms as a staff member speaks to them in a way which indicates that the causes of their anger are understood. Attendance rates are very variable between students, but improve significantly the longer the student is in the school. The short-term exclusion rate is high compared to national figures, but it has a markedly positive impact on students' subsequent behaviour. Whilst an appropriate restraint procedure is in place, it has not been necessary to use it.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. In relation to students' spiritual development, what is striking is the way that they become progressively more self-aware the longer they are at school. As a result of the sensitive approach taken by staff, and also the impact of being with sympathetic peers, they are much more able to define themselves, their problems and their wishes. Students have developing moral views and, significantly, understand that two sides of an issue or argument must be considered. Socially, they generally get on well together. There are arguments, but they are resolved. Students' cultural development is good. The school is ethnically diverse and students genuinely find this interesting. In discussion, some White British students recounted how a Muslim student had explained to them the significance of prayer, fasting and halal and non-halal meat. Overall, the students are open to a wide range of views and teachers always ensure that teaching material is objective and unbiased.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good. The teachers have a difficult task in delivering an academic curriculum at the same time as dealing with strong behavioural issues. In the main, they deal with this very well. In particular, they are quick to realise when individual students are feeling stressed or when others are becoming disengaged. If a student suddenly walks out of class, their response is calm, understanding and encouraging, so that the student returns to work. Teachers are quick to change what they are doing if their planned teaching strategy does not work. However, despite this, they are still quick to challenge students well by providing work that moves them on and meets the requirements of the syllabus.

Teaching off site and in the home is generally very effective, not least because it is done on a one-to-one basis. While the vast majority of students appreciate the opportunity to be taught outside school, a small number finds it difficult and would prefer to be in a normal class. This adversely affects their behaviour and so their achievement. Teachers understand this and find helpful ways of ensuring that the students make progress.

Marking of students' work is clear and helpful. Statements of special educational needs and the school's own individual learning plans for each student are followed in fine detail. Students' progress is carefully tracked and the results used to inform teaching. The results are shared regularly with students, parents, carers and the local authority.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The quality of the curriculum is good. It provides appropriate experience for all students including those in school, those educated at home and for those educated off site. It covers all the required areas of learning. The functional skills programme is undertaken by all students and covers English, mathematics and ICT. A large majority of students also take the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness, generally referred to as ASDAN. This covers personal, social and health education, citizenship, science and technology, beliefs and values, sports and leisure, personal finance and expressive arts. It also provides further education in mathematics and English. The teachers plan successfully in great detail how to interpret and deliver the curriculum to best suit the requirements of each student and they are quick to amend what they cover if lessons do not go quite as planned when students do not understand or exhibit bad behaviour. The school's flexibility according to demand is also evidenced by the recent introduction of the BTEC hair and beauty,

GCSE media studies and an English as a second language qualification. Careers education is successfully delivered by outside agency staff.

The formal curriculum is supplemented by a good range of other activities. The school's spring magazine details local visits to places such as the Cutty Sark, the National Maritime Museum, Woolwich Arsenal and Eltham Palace. However, the best and most successful recent example of an extra-curricular activity is the school's involvement in Shine, which is a competition run by the Stationers' Foundation in the City of London. The school won Shine's Harrison Cup for its media production.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. All the regulations are met. The school has all the required policies including those for behaviour, anti-bullying, health and safety and safeguarding. Recruitment checks are thorough, including checks on supply staff. There is a single central register of staff which complies with requirements. Staff have been properly trained in first aid and child protection, and they have a very good understanding of safeguarding procedures. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly, including those for visits outside school. Students are very well supervised and staff manage behaviour effectively to ensure safety. There is an appropriate restraint policy which staff understand. The record of sanctions is properly maintained, as are the admission and attendance registers.

The school gives effective advice on how to live a healthy life through its curriculum, posters and policies, such as the prohibition of fizzy drinks in school. When asked, students were very knowledgeable about the best foods to eat and the hazards of smoking. They are well aware of the dangers of drugs and have a good understanding of sexual health issues.

Leadership and management

Good

The quality of leadership and management is good. The school's leaders are highly motivated in their desire to give students who have experienced difficulties in their mainstream school a second chance. In this school, they have taken on a significant challenge, and they are meeting their aims very well.

There is rigorous self-evaluation. In part, this is because leaders are obliged to report students' academic progress and personal development on a regular basis to the local authority. There is a very close professional relationship with the authority and this helps the school to understand the authority's priorities and expectations. There is also a close and successful relationship with all the agencies and professionals involved in the students' care. The school is involved in the authority's 'team-around-the-child' and other meetings. The school has very good relations with parents and carers who, as a result, can participate more fully in their child's education. All these factors contribute significantly to improving students' progress.

The school's appraisal system is very effective and this includes effective monitoring of supply staff and teaching assistants to ensure high standards of support for students and teachers.

The school's accommodation is good and includes a large indoor open space mainly used for recreation. The local park and sports centre are also used for recreation and PE. The school has a purpose-built hair and beauty salon. The complaints procedure meets requirements and parents, carers and the local authority receive the required information about the school.

The proprietor has ensured that all the regulations 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 the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	134402
Inspection number	422763
DfE registration number	203/6300
Type of school	Special school for students with behavioural problems
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	12–16 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Number of part time pupils	7
Proprietor	Right Choice Project
Chair	Christine Easterbrook
Headteacher	Mr Banjo Aromolaran
Date of previous school inspection	November 23–24 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13,500
Telephone number	0208 8546229
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