

# ASD Learning Centre - Gravesend

42-44 Harmer Street, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 2AX

## Inspection dates

29–30 April 2014

## Context of the inspection

This inspection was undertaken at the request of the registration authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan, which was judged to be inadequate when it was submitted. This was an unannounced inspection. It was the first monitoring inspection to check the school's progress since it was last inspected in June 2013, when it was found to be inadequate overall.

## Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

**Good progress**

## Curriculum

The last inspection judged that the school was not implementing its curriculum policy effectively, that the curriculum was not giving students of compulsory school age a full-time educational experience and that subjects taught were not appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of students, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The inspection also judged that students did not receive adequate preparation for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Senior leaders planned to write a new curriculum policy, make changes to the curriculum, especially for older students, and develop new timetables to increase the hours of study. The school planned to enhance the personal, health and social education (PHSE) programme and introduce a number of new teaching resources especially for mathematics, English, science and information and communication technology.

There is now a new curriculum policy that accurately describes the subjects that students study. This policy is supported by more appropriate and detailed schemes of work and lesson plans. Students follow new timetables that apply to both morning and afternoon lessons. These are individual for the older students who follow a range of new examination and vocational courses. The timetables ensure that all students regularly study all the subjects they are required to cover. The daily routines have been changed since the last inspection. This means that the time students spend in lessons is now sufficient. A number of new resources, for example commercial schemes of work and examination syllabuses such as the ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) PHSE course, have been introduced to give a better structure to the curriculum.

The previous inspection judged that students, especially the older ones, did not receive enough careers advice and they did not have a programme to meet their needs. The

school planned to ensure that all Year 10 and Year 11 students would have interviews with external careers advisory staff. The last inspection also found that students who were above compulsory age did not receive activities appropriate to their needs. Older students can now study a wider range of subjects that not only supports academic studies in English, mathematics and science but also helps to develop other work-related skills.

The school has an arrangement with other education providers that, if required, can provide students with, for example, experience of building construction, working with animals, motor mechanics and computer studies. Senior leaders have also introduced a range of courses that successfully support the development of students' life skills. Some of these studies lead to nationally recognised qualifications. Students now have access to external careers advisers and they receive help in developing the skills they need to apply for jobs and write applications and curriculum vitae.

The last inspection found that not that all students were enabled to acquire sufficient skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. These areas of study now have a higher profile. Students regularly take part in group discussions that support the development of speaking and listening. The school correctly puts much emphasis on literacy and, in particular, writing. Students are now receiving specific individual support to help them improve their writing skills. Early signs are promising and some students are now making more rapid progress in this area of learning.

The last inspection judged that the curriculum was not meeting the needs of all students, including those with a statement of special educational needs. Improvement targets are now set for all students. They help teachers to plan lessons more effectively to meet students' individual needs. Senior leaders are continuing to develop more detailed analyses so that they can always be sure that students' studies meet the requirements of their statements of special educational needs. Senior leaders now have a simple, but helpful, 'map' of each student's needs, identifying what the school is doing to help the students make progress.

The curriculum changes allow all students to learn and make progress. All curriculum requirements are now met.

### **Quality of teaching**

The last inspection judged that there was an inadequate process to evaluate how well students were doing. Senior leaders planned to introduce a new system to monitor students' progress.

There is now a much-improved process for monitoring and checking how well students are learning. Teachers and teaching assistants record what students have achieved after each lesson. There is a more rigorous approach to assessment, which means that senior leaders are now in a better position to check how well students are progressing against National Curriculum levels, their projected GCSE attainments and other individual targets.

The more rigorous approach to curriculum planning and use of some commercial schemes and examination syllabuses have helped to ensure that lessons are better matched to all students' needs. Senior leaders are introducing a more rigorous approach to check the quality of teaching and to provide specific support for staff to ensure that more teaching is

good. The requirements for the quality of teaching are now met.

### **Premises and accommodation**

The previous inspection found that the school did not have facilities for students to change and shower after taking part in physical education. Physical education now takes place at offsite centres, all of which have shower and changing facilities. The school did not have appropriate facilities in the room set aside for students with short-term illness or injury. A wash basin has now been installed so that requirements are met.

### **Provision for of information for parents, carers and others**

The school had not made clear the arrangement for students who speak English as an additional language. This information is now in place and it is clear that it can be obtained from the school. Requirements are now met.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

**The school has made good progress and now meets all The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent schools standards') and associated requirements'.**

## Inspection team

Daniel Towl, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Information about this school

- The school was first registered in June 2012 as a special school for up to 20 pupils in the age range eight to 19 years.
- The proprietor is ASD Learning Limited, a company that owns and manages this centre and two similar ones.
- The school is sited in a two-storey building in the centre of Gravesend.
- There are 20 pupils on roll from four different local authorities: Kent, Medway and the London Boroughs of Bexley and Greenwich.
- All of the 19 boys and one girl have been permanently excluded from their previous schools or were in danger of exclusion. All have a statement of special educational needs relating to autism or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The school works with three partner educational providers. It also uses additional external provision for physical education.
- The school aims to ‘... provide high quality alternative provision for young people who are excluded or otherwise without a school placement or appropriate provision’. It intends to do this by providing ‘a different approach to learning, with a flexible approach, designed around the individual young person’s needs’.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138408
<b>Inspection number</b>	441347
<b>DfE registration number</b>	886/6139
<p>This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.</p>	
<b>Type of school</b>	Special day school for students with autism or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of students</b>	8–19 years
<b>Gender of students</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of students on the school roll</b>	19
<b>Number of part time students</b>	1
<b>Proprietor</b>	ASD Learning
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Mersh
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5–7 June 2013
<b>Annual fees (day students)</b>	£26,325–£29,250
<b>Telephone number</b>	01471 325999
<b>Email address</b>	paul.mersh@asdlearning.com

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