

Full Circle Education

124–126 Broad Walk, Kidbrooke, London, SE3 8ND

Inspection dates

3–5 June 2014

Overall effectiveness

Good

2

Achievement of pupils

Good

2

Quality of teaching

Good

2

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Good

2

Leadership and management

Good

2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- It enables young people to experience success and grow in self-confidence. They are very well prepared for adult life.
- Teaching is good and helps all students to make good progress in reading, writing and basic mathematics. Teaching supports some outstanding achievement on the sports leadership course.
- It offers a broad, relevant and interesting range of subjects in which students can gain accreditation for their achievements. An exceptional variety of activities and trips enriches their learning and experience of life.
- Students are very well cared for, supported and safeguarded. Their attendance is closely checked. Clear boundaries and a consistent approach by all staff to the management of students' behaviour improve their personal and social development well.
- The school is well led and managed. Leaders have ensured that teaching and achievement are good. It has developed rapidly since it opened a year ago.
- Close links with parents, carers and the local authority staff are of great benefit to the students. The school's strong ethos and clear aims are shared and supported by everyone involved.

It is not yet outstanding because

- While there is good teaching, not enough is outstanding because it does not always challenge students fully, particularly the more able, who could achieve even more.
- Not enough homework is set.
- The curriculum includes a limited amount of science, and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Management systems which hold staff accountable for the quality of their work and lead to further development are not yet fully effective.

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 carried out with one day's notice.
- Eight lessons were observed in whole or part, most in conjunction with the headteacher.
- The inspector examined the students' work and assessment records. She talked to the students about their work and interests, and heard some reading. She shared lunch with them.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher and some of the trustees and staff. The inspector was also able to speak to some of the local authority's professional staff who visit the school.
- A range of documentation was examined, including school policies, records, schemes of work, reports, risk assessments and newsletters.
- The inspector considered the views expressed by five members of staff through survey questionnaires. No information was available from the online questionnaire Parent View, but the inspector spoke to two parents about their views of the school.

Inspection team

Jane Cooper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Full Circle Education is a small independent alternative education provider which is registered to take 30 students aged from 11 to 16 years who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- The school provides for two specific groups of students: those who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream schools; and vulnerable students who require a period of respite in an alternative setting to help them manage their difficulties. The school aims 'to nurture aspiration, achievement and self-belief; to focus on future potential rather than past history; and to provide young people with high-quality learning experiences'.
- There are currently 20 boys and girls in school, five of whom are short-term placements. Four students have a statement of special educational needs, and there is one looked after child. Four students remain on the roll of their mainstream school. All students have been placed at the school by their local authority or by their mainstream school and are funded by them.
- The school is located in a two-storey building adjacent to a youth centre in the London borough of Greenwich. It uses the centre's extensive sporting facilities during the school day.
- Although operating as an educational charity for many years, Full Circle was first registered as a school in 2013. This is its first inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of the teaching by:
 - expecting more of all students, particularly the most able, by planning more challenging tasks
 - ensuring that all teachers have a wide view of their students' achievements in different subjects so as to plan consistently as a team
 - setting homework on a regular basis.
- Develop the curriculum further to offer a broader range of work in ICT and science in particular and increase the access to Level 3 courses for the most-able students.
- Ensure systems for making checks on how well the school is doing and the performance of staff and their training are more fully developed.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Good

- The students achieve well as a result of patient, confident and effective teaching and well-planned courses which are relevant to their needs and interests.
- Although the school caters for all abilities, most students arrive at the school with attainment that is much lower than young people of a similar age. The longer they remain in school, the more progress the students make in narrowing the gap between their attainment and those of their peers nationally.
- The vast majority of students acquire good basic literacy and numeracy skills, gaining accreditation at Levels 1 or 2 for their achievements. Even those on short-term programmes gain credit for their work. Students' reading, although in most cases below the national average, improves well over time, and some were heard reading aloud with confidence and good expression. Students' written work shows progression in range, quality and accuracy. The school is effective in ensuring all groups of students have an equal opportunity to achieve well.
- As they grow in confidence, their speaking and listening skills also develop well. They hold sincere views and are able to express and justify their opinions in discussions. Importantly, they also learn to listen to others and respect different points of view.
- The students have a range of mathematical ability. Most have sound number awareness, can estimate successfully and use a calculator confidently. They are keen and able to solve problems, most readily where these are related to real-life situations such as percentage reductions in prices. On occasions, the more-able students do not achieve as much as they could when they are not stretched by the tasks they are set.
- The students enjoy and achieve well in the broad range of courses provided by the school. These include food technology, ICT, GCSE media studies, GCSE Mathematics, the AQA Unit Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Citizenship Awards, The Sports Leaders Award, Arts Award, and The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.
- Most students have good levels of physical fitness and enjoy sport. Exceptionally high standards of planning, coaching and leadership were seen from students preparing for the Sports Leaders Level 2 awards. The students have derived great benefit from the challenging outdoor activities they have taken part in such as sailing, canoeing and rock-climbing, where they have learnt self-reliance and teamwork. Those who choose to work in the school garden are able to gain certificates for horticulture and poultry husbandry.

Quality of teaching

Good

- The quality of the teaching is good and helps the students to achieve well. The small teaching groups build up strong and respectful relationships where students feel safe and re-engage with learning. Teachers do not give up on students: they are all helped to make good progress from their respective starting points.
- Learning is well organised, for example, with clear aims and typically finishing with a review to check what has been learnt. The teachers know students exceptionally well and thus adapt materials and tasks as necessary, often using video clips or other resources from 'real life' to engage interest. Students get on with their work well both individually and when working in pairs.
- Teachers give students plenty of praise and encouragement which boosts their self-confidence. However, tasks are not always sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most-able students, for example, in requiring extended pieces of work involving individual research. Not enough homework is set. Where thoroughly challenged, for example by the Sports Leaders course, students achieve exceptionally well.
- Teachers mark work clearly and include both supportive comments and pointers for improvement. Good use is made of testing to establish a baseline when students enter the school and to set targets for making progress. There are clear procedures for making checks on

progress, but the collection of data is at too early a stage to make analysis possible. The school enables all students to gain a range of worthwhile and recognised qualifications.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Good

- Students generally come to Full Circle with low self-esteem following a pattern of failure, exclusion or mental health difficulties which have led to low attendance, poor behaviour and resistant attitudes to learning. The school makes a very good job of helping them to find new interests and achieve something they can be proud of. They are all treated with respect. The ethos of the school is one of a warm and caring family in which everyone is valued and their unique talents celebrated. They learn good manners, fair play, and know right from wrong.
- The school has extremely high expectations for students' behaviour. The policy for promoting good behaviour is explicit about rewards and the consequences of anti-social behaviour. It is implemented consistently by staff so that all students know the boundaries and acknowledge that they are fair.
- Procedures for tackling bullying are implemented rigorously. The school seeks to prevent recurrence of poor behaviour through strong pastoral support, individual counselling, and involvement of multi-agency support. It promotes good behaviour through assemblies, citizenship, and personal, social and health education. With patient and consistent reinforcement, the students understand the harm their anti-social behaviour can cause, and they learn to modify it. However, the school has tackled some serious incidents this year, and the high number of exclusions is justified.
- The recorded outbursts of poor behaviour are in stark contrast to the calm environment for learning found in class, on the pitch and in the garden, where students engage well in discussion, complete the tasks they are set, work and play well together, and generally put effort into what they do. Very high levels of motivation were seen in the practical afternoon activities. Students say that they love coming to Full Circle and that it has 'saved their lives'. Their parents and carers agree.
- Students engage with the local and wider community through learning about other faiths and cultures, and holding cake and garden sales to raise funds for trips or charities, such as 'Little Stars', a local charity for disabled children. The students are open-minded and tolerant. An audit of the curriculum ensures that they are not exposed to partisan views or bias.
- The extensive range of off-site visits helps students to discover new interests and ambition. This is coupled with a rich programme of visiting experts who come into school to talk, for example, about sexual health and relationships, financial planning, responsible citizenship, public services and careers. In this way, leaders ensure that young people are extremely well prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Almost all the Year 11 leavers have secured a worthwhile place of their choice at college or on an apprenticeship scheme.

Leadership and management

Good

- The trustees and headteacher share a clear and ambitious vision for the school's continued development. They have created an inclusive ethos where staff work relentlessly as a cohesive team for the success of each individual. It has come a long way in the year that it has been operating. Senior leaders have the highest expectations of students' behaviour, social development and personal progress. All staff model respectful behaviour and high professional standards.
- The school is very well led and managed. Senior leaders have ensured that there is a well-planned curriculum, underpinned by detailed schemes of work, which meets the requirements of students who have a statement of special educational needs, and includes a broad, relevant and interesting range of subjects. Nevertheless, the range of work in ICT and science is currently limited and this affects students' achievement and their potential access to Level 3 courses. The lack of specialist teaching and facilities for these subjects is an area the school plans to improve.
- Procedures for safeguarding and child protection are strong. There is a suitable safeguarding

policy which is fully implemented, and all staff training is up to date. The designated officer is knowledgeable, vigilant and skilled in multi-agency working. The school's single central register records that all staff, volunteers and trustees have been thoroughly vetted and checked for their suitability to work with young people.

- There are comprehensive procedures for ensuring students' health and safety at school and on trips, and careful risk assessments are made. Procedures for safe storage and administration of medication are suitable and there are sufficient staff trained in first aid. Fire safety precautions are rigorous.
- The school's accommodation is suitable for educational purposes and well maintained. It makes very good use of the adjoining youth centre's extensive grounds and sporting facilities during the day.
- Attendance is recorded appropriately and monitored rigorously. The school works in close partnership with the local authority's attendance officer. Although overall the school's attendance falls well below the national average, it has had remarkable success in improving the attendance of almost all students.
- Senior leaders have a clear and accurate idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and a plan for improvement. Formal systems for holding the headteacher and staff to account for their work, managing their performance and making checks on how well the school is doing are not yet fully operational as all the necessary data are not yet available.
- Close links have been forged with parents and carers, and with local authority officers, who receive all the information to which they are entitled. The complaints procedure meets requirements, but no formal complaints have been received. The school enjoys the strong support of its staff, students, and their parents and carers.
- The trustees of the school have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school that provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school that provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that 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	140226
Inspection number	443035
DfE registration number	203/6002
Type of school	Alternative education provider
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Full Circle Education
Chair of Trustees	Gary Basset
Headteacher	Nina Moore
Date of previous school inspection	This is the first inspection
Annual fees	£15,600–£16,575
Telephone number	020 8856 2050
Email address	admin@fullcircleeducatin.co.uk

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