

# Marvel School

Lower Ground Floor, Navigator Kilburn Building, 12–22 Kilburn High Road, London, NW6 5UH

<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–12 June 2014	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good school because

- Students make good progress academically and in managing the challenges related to autistic spectrum disorders. This is because the work they are given is set at the right level.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers have an excellent understanding of how to help and support students with a diagnosis of autism and special needs.
- Students make good progress in improving their behaviour so that conduct and attitudes to learning are good.
- Staff ensure that each student has an individual timetable, with learning activities matched accurately to their level of development and academic ability.
- Students are well cared for. Staff develop positive and supportive relationships with students and understand their needs.
- Leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching and achievement are good.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school has been running under the current ownership and leadership for a short time. Some elements of leadership and management with regard to development planning and resources are not fully established.
- The management of staff performance and its impact on achieving excellence in teaching and learning is still in the early stage of development.

### 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.
- The inspector observed 11 lessons or parts of lessons, some accompanied by the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the school's leaders, teaching staff and students. A range of documentation was examined, including policies, assessment records, curriculum and teachers' plans. The inspector heard students read and looked at students' written and other work. The inspector observed them at break times and ate lunch with them.
- The views expressed by seven members of staff through survey questionnaires were considered.
- There were an insufficient number of responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey, but two parents spoke to the inspector by telephone and in person.

## Inspection team

Jill Bainton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Marvel School was previously registered under the name of ASD Learning London. It is an independent special school for six students aged 11 to 18 years who have emotional or behavioural difficulties or have autistic spectrum disorders. It is held in part of a youth centre in Kilburn, London. Academus Alternative Limited has run the school since September 2013. This is the school's first inspection. The headteacher took up her post in February 2014. The previous headteacher was in post for one term only.
- Students have all been referred by local education authorities and all come with statements of special educational needs. There are currently four students on roll. Their ages range from 12 to 17 years. The majority of the students have been diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorders or related conditions. The school focuses on improving behaviour, social skills and academic achievement. The school does not have a religious or political affiliation.
- A minority of students are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- The school uses off-site provision for physical education.
- The school's mission statement is 'dreamers, believers and doers'. Staff aim to bring out the best in each student and to help them believe in themselves.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of leadership and management by:
  - establishing more effective systems to monitor teaching and learning in order to raise all teaching to the highest standard
  - further developing the school improvement plan
  - ensuring that the school is well resourced.

## Inspection judgements

### Achievement of pupils

**Good**

- Students enter the school at varying times and their attainment on entry is typically below that of students of a similar age because of previously disrupted schooling. The majority of students make good progress from their low starting points. This is evident in work in students' books, observations of their learning in lessons and through the school's own records of each student's progress.
- Students achieve well because tasks are carefully set at the right level. Staff have a very good understanding of their complex learning needs. This is based on their detailed knowledge of the students and their assessments on entry to identify gaps in learning. Staff use this information very well to support the students. As a result, students grow in knowledge about the subjects they are studying and develop new skills in line with their abilities.
- Students make good improvements in their communication skills and are given plentiful opportunities to make choices. During the inspection, students were observed being rewarded and praised by staff for listening to others during discussions. Students are encouraged to articulate their responses with great care and thought. This has very positive effects on their written work, with those who were previously reluctant writers achieving better results than in their last schools.
- Students learning English as an additional language do well and quickly acquire the confidence to speak, recognise letters and sounds and write in English.
- Students achieve well in mathematics, learning to tell the time using practical aids, to add and subtract, and gain an understanding of shape and space. Applications of mathematics are also well developed through practical cookery and life skills activities such as shopping for ingredients.
- In English, students' reading and writing skills are developing well. During the inspection the inspector listened to students read. They were able to demonstrate an understanding of the text through discussion of its meaning. Students are encouraged to articulate their responses and enjoy frequent discussion with the supportive staff. Students demonstrate good overall progress in other subjects.
- No students will be taking national examinations this year. Students in Year 12 are planning to access college courses part time and have been given guidance and support to do so. The planned programme helps support students well in their preparation for the next stage of their education.
- Parents and carers who spoke to the inspector during the inspection were pleased with the progress students were making. One parent commented, 'My son started off being shy but settled in quickly and loves being at Marvel School.'

### Quality of teaching

**Good**

- Teaching is consistently good, with some outstanding teaching seen. Students make good progress in their learning. This is because the experienced teachers provide them with activities that are appropriate for their very specific needs and enable them to build on what they have learned previously.
- The relationships are very positive between staff and students. These, together with the interactions that take place during learning, are significant features of the teaching. As a result, staff provide the students with work which is well matched to their learning needs.
- Students are effectively challenged and respond by making good progress and behaving well. Learning activities are interesting and engaging for the students, and this helps to sustain their interest.
- Staff help the students to settle well into established routines using visual timetables and clear explanations. Students listen and concentrate well for limited periods of time. Staff are well

tuned in to their learning needs. They time the lessons well and change direction if they need to in response to the students' interest and enthusiasm. Occasionally in lessons, students may repeat a task when they seem to be confident in it. When this happens opportunities are lost to try to move them to the next stage.

- The skilled learning support assistants work very well with the teachers, playing an important role in supporting students' learning and the good progress the students make. The class team's knowledge of the personal needs of the students and their insight into how they learn most effectively ensures that lessons are productive.
- The resources for learning are adequate, but limited. Staff are adept at devising and preparing their own resources. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning, but there are insufficient resources to extend opportunities for learning.
- The systems for checking students' progress are at an early stage. However, effective tracking is now in place and the information gained is used well by staff to plan their learning sessions. Checking of students' ongoing learning in lessons is good and used well by staff to extend learning. Students' work is well marked and staff also provide good verbal feedback to help the students improve their work. Parents are given weekly and half termly reports which keep them very well informed about their child's progress.
- The curriculum is well designed to meet the specific needs of the students. It covers all the required areas of learning and is taught using a topic-based approach. It is well documented and used effectively by staff to plan interesting and meaningful sessions for the students.
- The current topic is the World Cup, which the students chose, and is having positive effects on progress. They are busily engaged making maps of the continents and countries involved. They learn about the history of Brazil and relate it to the history of their own backgrounds. This leads to students writing accounts of their own experiences abroad, of cooking meals using food produced in Brazil and from countries of their origins. They successfully study different times zones and enjoy identifying and painting flags of the nations involved.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

## Good

- The behaviour of students is good. Staff focused initially on improving students' attitudes, behaviour and attendance and this has proved beneficial.
- The majority of the students attend very well, enjoy their participation in the planned activities and take an active role in their learning. Staff monitor attendance vigilantly and make frequent contact with parents, carers and the local authority if a student has not come to school. This has helped to improve the attendance of the small minority who are prone to miss school.
- Students help staff with lunch each day, budgeting and shopping for the ingredients, and helping to prepare and cook it. They have a clear understanding of how to eat healthily. Lunch is a relaxed, friendly occasion with staff and students sharing the meal together.
- Students who are new to the school quickly learn what behaviour is required of them because there is an expectation that they will be respectful and courteous to each other and to staff. This is successfully reinforced during lessons and at break and lunch times.
- Students make significant progress in many aspects of their personal development and develop self-confidence and self-esteem through the very supportive staff and the planned personal, social, health and citizenship curriculum. The life skills programme helps them to gain valuable skills for life outside school.
- Bullying of any kind is rare and students are effectively encouraged to be respectful of each other whatever their background or needs. Students are very positive about the school. Typical comments include, 'The staff really help me...I am happy here.'
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. There is an appropriate range of policies and procedures in place and staff training is up to date for safeguarding.
- The school's promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and enables students to thrive in a caring and nurturing learning environment. Students are receptive to new ideas, are developing knowledge of their own and other cultures, and racial

harmony is effectively promoted.

- Leaders ensure that, when controversial and political issues are considered, steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views.

## Leadership and management

## Requires improvement

- The leadership and management require improvement. The proprietors have only run the school for a short time and are beginning to embed good practice and procedures. They have devised a self-evaluation and improvement plan. However, this has yet to have a full impact on identifying how the school's weaknesses are to be addressed. For example, it does not show how resources will be improved or provide a budget for this purpose.
- The monitoring of teaching is at an early stage and is not yet formalised. It does not yet support staff with sufficient opportunities for professional development.
- The leader's priority is to improve students' attitudes, behaviour and attendance in order that the school can put down the sure foundations for teaching and learning to develop. This has proved to be successful for the majority of students and the teaching, curriculum and students' achievement are good. There is strong capacity for further improvement as the school grows.
- Leaders have had a positive impact in the short space of time since they have run the school to build a team of loyal and committed staff. This team ensures that the students receive a good standard of education and achieve well. The staff and proprietors hold a shared vision of what the school is trying to achieve. Staff questionnaire responses indicate that they are highly positive about the school and the way that the students have made good progress in a short time. Discussion with parents and carers also confirms this.
- The headteacher has worked very effectively during the short time she has been in post to ensure the quality of teaching and support the staff. She has begun to observe teaching, reviewed work in students' books and evaluated teachers' planning. She has, with help from staff, put in place systems to track and evaluate the students' progress. Together, they have reviewed all the individual education plans and ensured that parents and carers are kept very well informed. This has a positive impact on students' academic and personal progress. The headteacher and staff provide very good role models for the students.
- The school's safeguarding systems are well maintained. All staff have been checked for their suitability to work with children and the information is accurately recorded on the required single central record of staff appointments.
- The proprietors have ensured that all of the independent school regulations are met. The premises and accommodation meets the requirements. All the required information for parents and carers is provided, including a suitable complaints policy.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate
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## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139558
<b>Inspection number</b>	429467
<b>DfE registration number</b>	202/6003

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary day special school for pupils with Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD).
<b>School status</b>	Independent
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	4
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Academus Alternative Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Hawkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amita Chakravorty
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Registered on 8 March 2013
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£39,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	0207 3287172
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:headteacher@marvelschool.org.uk">headteacher@marvelschool.org.uk</a>



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