

# King Edwin School

Mill Lane, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees, TS20 1LG

**Inspection dates** 14–16 October 2014

| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | <b>Good</b> | <b>2</b> |
|--------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| Leadership and management      | Good        | 2        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | Good        | 2        |
| Quality of teaching            | Good        | 2        |
| Achievement of pupils          | Good        | 2        |

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good school

- From very low starting points students make rapid progress in learning. Their achievement is good.
- The good teaching is effective in ensuring that students catch up in their English and mathematics. As a result, older students gain qualifications.
- The staff promote excellent relationships. All students were previously very disaffected from education but they enjoy coming to school, attend regularly and take part in learning.
- The behaviour and safety of students are good. Students report that they feel very safe here and the measures taken to protect them are outstanding.
- As a result of good leadership and management including governance the quality of teaching and students' achievement has improved since the school was established.
- The company that owns the school has ensured that standards have been improved and maintained throughout a period of change.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students do not always make as much progress as they should because time is sometimes wasted moving between classes and in changing activities in lessons.
- Teachers do not ensure that students always act upon the recommendations made when they are marking their work.
- Teachers' handwriting is sometimes a poor model for students.
- There are not always enough interesting resources including information communication technology to maximise students' enthusiasm for learning.
- The school's plans for students in Key Stage 3 to further improve their literacy and numeracy skills in different subject areas have not yet been fully introduced.

### 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 parts of eight lessons taught by five staff, breakfast club and two of the regular gatherings of all students and staff (circle time.) He looked at examples of students' work in a wide range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other classroom staff, two members of the board of the proprietorial body and an educational psychologist. The inspector met formally with two students and spoke informally with all students during lessons, break times and lunchtime.
- The inspector scrutinised teachers' plans, school policies and other important documents.
- The views of parents and staff were taken into account through looking at the results of school and inspection questionnaires. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).

## Inspection team

Terry McKenzie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- King Edwin School is an independent special day school for boys and girls aged six to 16 years. It is located in a building previously used as a local authority special school in a residential district of Stockton-on-Tees. The school opened in October 2013 and the proprietorial body is a company set up as a joint venture between the local authority and a private organisation operating special schools in Scotland.
- The school is registered for up to 50 students and provides full time education for them. Currently, only nine secondary-aged students are on roll but the local authority intends to increase the numbers steadily, including by beginning to place primary-aged students.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs in relation to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. None of the students are disabled.
- The school aims to ensure that all who come here can return to full time education, gain recognised qualifications and succeed through therapeutic and supportive processes.
- A few students attend some of their lessons at the local authority college of further education in Stockton-on-Tees (Riverside College).
- The present headteacher has been in post since the start of this term and is seconded from a school in another local authority. This is the first time that King Edwin School has been inspected.

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

- Enhance teaching so that students always make the best possible progress in their learning by:
  - role modelling high standards of writing in class
  - ensuring that the recommendations made in marking students' work are always acted upon
  - encouraging students to move more quickly and efficiently between classes
  - overcoming students' reluctance to change from one activity to another during lessons
  - providing a greater range of interesting resources including those related to modern technology so that the motivation of students can be maximised
  - fully implementing plans to create more opportunities for students in Key Stage 3 to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy through a greater variety of subject areas.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Through good leadership and management of the recently appointed headteacher all of the regulations are met and all main aspects of the school's work are good. New and efficient ways of understanding the work of the school have been introduced. These include paying closer attention to the information about how students learn and make progress.
- The headteacher is improving the quality of teaching through examining closely how staff go about their work and setting targets for them to improve. This is becoming linked to pay.
- With the support of members of the proprietorial board the headteacher has begun to identify how some staff can support the school as middle managers.
- The work done by leaders and managers to protect the students and enable them to feel very safe is outstanding because the headteacher and others have undertaken high levels of training and have considerable experience in safeguarding. All of the required policies and procedures relating to health and safety are in place.
- The morale of the staff is high. All responded positively through their inspection questionnaires with several asserting their pride in being a member of staff here.
- The school carefully tracks the progress made by all students from the time of their arrival here. Records indicate that almost all make gains in their learning in accordance with the targets set for them. When students fall behind or fail to make the required degrees of progress this is quickly picked up by the headteacher and others so that additional help can be provided to any that require it.
- The range of courses made available to students has increased. Opportunities are being made available to encourage all to achieve, whatever their starting points.
- In Key Stage 3, however, plans have not yet been fully put into place that will ensure students can make use of a wide range of subjects to improve their skills in literacy and numeracy.
- Under the direction of the headteacher improvements have been made by staff in their planning for how students will learn and make progress. Behaviour management by staff is largely effective and mainly consistent in its approach.
- The pastoral work of the school is improving, for example, breakfast is provided for students each day. The daily timetable provides opportunities for students to consider their behaviour. Staff praise students publicly in these forums and explain the extent to which students are meeting their behaviour targets for the day.
- The views of parents are canvassed by the school and these indicate great support for its work with their children.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that students have a wide range of opportunities to get to know how people of other backgrounds work and live. They actively promote students' understanding of British values and tolerance of each other and the wider community. Leaders and managers ensure that extremist views and opinions have no place in the school. As a result, the school is a harmonious community and students demonstrate a high level of respect for each other, and for people who are different to them.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - as undertaken by members of the board of directors of the proprietorial body is good
  - the headteacher and others are challenged to constantly improve the school
  - members of the board were particularly effective in helping to ensure the smooth running of the school when it recently experienced a period of change in senior leadership.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Students generally behave well outside of lessons and around the school. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. For example, they always spoke sensibly with the inspector and were curious about the inspection processes. The reports from the college are that the students sent by the school behave well and attend regularly.
- The management of students' behaviour by staff is usually good. All staff are extremely patient with the students, providing them with the support, time and opportunity to overcome ingrained negative traits. Staff are skilful in helping students understand why their behaviour might be unacceptable and they encourage students to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

- On occasions, however, too much time is wasted at the start and end of some lessons because staff are sometimes unable to prevent students from becoming distracted when moving between classrooms.
- Generally, students behave well in class and have good attitudes towards learning. Occasionally, their concentration slips because there are not as many exciting resources as they want. Students say that their motivation would increase if resources were always of interest to them.
- Although teachers are usually very skilful in managing and moderating students' behaviour in lessons and around school staff have not yet found the best ways to help students move quickly and efficiently between lessons and this leads to teaching and learning time being lost.
- Nevertheless, through rapidly developing positive behaviour students come to feel better about themselves. Their self-confidence soars and they are consequently able to take part in activities that they have rarely previously experienced, such as inter-school sports events and visits to places of interest. They become capable of undertaking supported work experience and some independently attend college.
- Almost all students have previously failed to attend school, some for very long periods of time. However, for most, their attendance rate here increases rapidly and almost all attend almost full time. Unauthorised absence is almost unknown.
- The safety of students is outstanding as is the school's work to keep students safe and secure. Students report that they feel very safe here and that there is no bullying or harassment by others. Indeed, the school is a very united community. Older students take great pride in mentoring new arrivals and those who are younger. One of the 'mentors' explained to the inspector: 'We do our best for them because staff have done their best for us!'
- The safeguarding arrangements for students are outstanding. All of the regulations for welfare, health and safety are met and the skills and experience of those involved in child protection shine through.
- In the short time that the school has been open most students have made remarkable progress in their personal developments and spiritual, moral, social and cultural values. The gains made here enable most to successfully take part in learning; some have already passed Functional Skills courses. A student in Key Stage 4 explained to the inspector: 'When I came here I never dreamed that I would get qualifications at the same level as GCSE or would be working towards a 'C' grade in English and maths!'

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching over time is good overall and all of the regulations relating to teaching are met. Some aspects of teaching are outstanding such as in enabling previously very disaffected students to gain externally accredited qualifications. As a result of the good teaching and learning students' progress is usually good.
- Students achieve well over their time in school. All of the evidence also indicates that most students achieve well in literacy, reading and mathematics because basic skills in these areas are generally taught well. The positive attitudes shown by students are encouraged by staff and they are more willing to take part in lessons and gain knowledge, skills and understanding as a result.
- All staff are skilled in encouraging students to take part in lessons, and mainly they do so successfully. Staff actively promote good relations between themselves and students, but this does not mean that they are too easy on the students. Indeed, when students are asked what is the best thing about the school they invariably say: 'It's the staff – they are very patient with us. Always firm and fair!'
- On very few occasions, staff do not anticipate that, because of their learning difficulties, students find the changes between activities during lessons problematic. These transitional moments during lessons sometimes result in some of the teaching and learning time being wasted.
- Teachers are inventive in providing students with a range of activities designed to maintain and improve their concentration. For example, in a lesson observed a student used slips of paper patiently to arrange a timeline. However, there is insufficient use of information and communication technology and other media to enhance learning. Teachers report that they would welcome access to a wider range of resources to use in lessons because they feel it would help students overcome the particular difficulties they experience with maintaining their concentration.
- In Key Stage 4 students make rapid gains and catch up in their literacy and numeracy skills and this is demonstrated by the successes that they have in passing Functional Skills courses. For students in Key Stage 3 there is less consistency in supporting students to develop these skills in a range of subjects.
- Classes are very small, often just one or two students, therefore teachers do not always have a classroom assistant present. When they do, the work of others in the classroom is effective and well managed. For example, in a science lesson seen both the teacher and classroom assistant worked skilfully with two students to help them to complete tasks and to take part in the practical activities. In another lesson the staff used good natured banter and humour to motivate students to complete their work. Here, there was

a very high degree of activity and the staff were careful to not do too much for the students, whose attitudes and behaviour remained excellent throughout this part of the lesson.

- Assessment of the students' capabilities is accurate. Staff know the students well and are very aware of any that might be at risk of falling behind because of particular difficulties that they might be experiencing and they adjust their lessons accordingly.
- Staff successfully integrate new students when they join the school. They help students to moderate and control their behaviour, attend regularly and settle into learning. As a result, most students begin to catch up quickly and are well prepared for moving onto the next stages of education, training or employment.
- In some lessons the standards of handwriting produced by teachers on whiteboards and when marking students' exercise books is poor. This does not provide a good model for students to emulate. Furthermore, teachers occasionally make comments in students' exercise books about how their work and efforts might be improved but these are rarely followed through, so chances for students to improve their learning even further are missed.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- The achievement of all groups of students is good because of the good quality of teaching. In Key Stage 4, particularly, there is evidence that much has already been done to help students to catch up with their peers in mainstream schools from the very low standards they demonstrate upon enrolment. Boys and girls do equally well in meeting their targets for learning which provide an appropriate level of challenge.
- The most able make similar progress to other students in the school.
- Staff check students' standards carefully upon arrival to ensure that courses of study are well matched to their levels of ability so that all can succeed. Almost all of the older students have gained externally validated qualifications equivalent to the lower levels of GCSE since arriving at the school. Some are working towards gaining qualifications in English and mathematics at the higher equivalent levels of GCSE. For a few, this is outstanding progress from very low starting points.
- For those who are unable to gain higher levels of qualification, vocational courses are provided at a local college and the students who attend there are on track to gain accredited qualifications. Some work towards qualifications at Entry Level so that all can have the best opportunities for moving on from school.
- In Key Stage 3, however, some students do not yet gain as much as they could in their English and mathematics. This is because leaders and managers have not yet fully introduced the plans for the development of literacy and numeracy skills to be consistently supported in all subjects. For example, currently, in some lessons, students practice their reading in a way that is carefully targeted to their reading ability. In other lessons, reading materials are not well matched to students' needs. The materials can sometimes be too difficult, or insufficiently challenging, for them to progress as well as possible in their reading.
- Notwithstanding the above, the school generally encourages students to read well. Indeed, students are proud of their ability to read and are keen to show what they can do. An example of this was witnessed in an English lesson where students took turns in reading aloud from a set of exemplary 'letters of complaint' that the teacher had provided for them to use.
- Occasionally, the rate of learning drops in lessons and when progress is less good, it is because there is insufficient variety of resources to support activity and students become a little restless.

## What inspection judgements mean

| School  |                      |
|---------|----------------------|
| Grade   | Judgement            |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding          |
| Grade 2 | Good                 |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate           |

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053).

## School details

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 140272   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 447248   |
| <b>DfE registration number</b> | 808/6004 |

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted 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>                        | Special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties |
| <b>School status</b>                         | Independent school  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                   | 6–16  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                      | Mixed   |
| <b>Number of students on the school roll</b> | 9   |
| <b>Number of part time pupils</b>            | 0   |
| <b>Proprietor</b>                            | Spark of Genius North East  |
| <b>Chair</b>                                 | Margaret Sloan  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                           | Angela Noble  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>    | Not previously inspected  |
| <b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>              | £38000  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                      | 01642 366610  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                            | Not applicable  |
| <b>Email address</b>                         | anoble2@parkview-school.co.uk   |



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