

On Track Education Centre Northants

Unit 6, Quarry Park Close, Northampton, NN3 6QB

Inspection dates

25–27 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school

- Students of all ages, including those in the sixth form, make good progress at the school because the quality of teaching is good. Almost all students enter employment, gain apprenticeships or continue in education after leaving the school.
- The quality of leadership and management are good. The board of directors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and are effective in holding leaders to account. They ensure that the school continues to get better.
- Leaders are effective in ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good. They provide very effective support to newly-qualified teachers to improve the quality of their work.
- Staff understand the needs of individual students very well. They operate effectively to remove barriers to students' learning, to keep them safe, and to support their improved behaviour, confidence and self-control.
- Staff ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all students, including those with a statement of special educational needs. This is because each student has an individual programme of learning that is tailored to meet their needs.
- Leaders have worked diligently to ensure that the school complies with all of the independent school standards.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students make good, but not outstanding progress. Teachers' marking does not accelerate students' learning as much as it could do because it does not always explain how work can be improved.
- Leaders do not check the quality of good teaching often enough to help it to become outstanding.
- Not all staff are aware of what should be done when it is suspected that students are vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism.
- Staff do not do enough to prevent new students from smoking cigarettes during the school day and on the school premises.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed the school's work, and met with school leaders and the Chair of the Board of Directors. He also held meetings or telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority, a senior leader from a school working in partnership with On Track Education Centre, and three parents and carers. One parent responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, which meant that there was an insufficient number of responses for this data to be considered. The inspector analysed responses to a questionnaire for students, issued by the school very recently, and to 14 questionnaires from staff. Informal conversations were also held with students to gather their views.
- The inspector observed students while they were learning. This included a joint observation of learning with a senior leader. The inspector scrutinized the school's records of students' learning and progress, samples of students' work in books, and a range of other documentation including school policies and the single central record of staff suitability checks. The inspector also made thorough checks on the suitability of the school's premises and accommodation.

Inspection team

Jeremy Spencer, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- On Track Northampton aims to provide support and individualised learning programmes to promote students' academic, vocational and social skills in order that they become equipped for positive, independent adult lives.
- The school is registered for up to 32 students, aged 11 to 19 years, who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and who are not managing in mainstream school. Some students have complex needs, such as autistic spectrum disorder. Ten of the students currently on roll at the school have statements of special educational needs and four students are in the care of a local authority.
- The school underwent its last full inspection in June 2011. Since the last inspection, the school has moved premises. An inspector visited the school in March 2012 to check the suitability of the new premises. The premises were judged to be appropriate. The school uses no alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement by:
 - ensuring that, when marking students' work, staff consistently identify the next steps of learning that students need to take and how work can be improved
 - ensuring that students respond to teachers' written comments in their books.
- Improve the behaviour and safety of students by ensuring that they do not smoke cigarettes on the school site or during the school day.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders spend more time monitoring the quality of teaching, to help it to become outstanding, and that improvement targets for teachers are checked more rigorously
 - ensuring that all staff are aware of what should be done when it is suspected that students are vulnerable to radicalisation or extremism.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders motivate and inspire staff to do the best job they can. All staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire agreed that they were proud to be members of staff at the school and understood what the school was trying to achieve. Motivated and engaged staff go the extra mile to create an atmosphere in which students feel safe, well-cared for and in which they feel they can succeed.
- Leaders have developed good systems to ensure that staff understand the needs, safety and performance of each student well. A key-worker programme underpins this, whereby each student has a designated member of staff to oversee their welfare and progress. Daily meetings are held where all staff meet together to share information about each student's progress, attendance and behaviour; this keeps the key worker up-to-date.
- Leaders ensure that most teachers, particularly those who are less experienced or new to the profession, are supported effectively to improve the quality of their work. However, the strongest teachers are not always observed frequently enough, or given sufficient guidance about how they can improve the quality of their teaching to be outstanding. Development points for these teachers are not always checked rigorously.
- The school's curriculum is good. Leaders ensure that there is an appropriate and tailored balance of subjects for each individual, including a good range of vocational subjects. All students are well prepared for life in modern Britain because the British values of democracy, the rule of law and tolerance of others are effectively taught. The curriculum also covers British history well. For example, students recently learned about Remembrance Day and the story of Guy Fawkes, which linked to the history of British politics. Students receive appropriate and personalised careers guidance information to help them to make informed choices about their next steps after leaving the school.
- Leaders ensure that the school's curriculum promotes students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development effectively. Students cultivate fruit and vegetables in the school grounds during the summer months and this plays a valuable role in promoting their understanding of how things grow, and thereby their spiritual development. Students' social and moral development is monitored carefully by key workers and is underpinned by an effective school rewards system which includes weekly awards for individual students' successes. Students' cultural development is also promoted effectively, for example, through a display, which outlines cultural diversity in the local area. Students were able to explain that people from different cultures have different beliefs which should be valued and respected. During the inspection, students showed a good understanding of different cultures when explaining the features of African hunting masks.
- Middle leaders are effective in their roles and make a good contribution to the school's effectiveness. For example, the school's leader responsible for health and safety ensures that a comprehensive range of risk assessments are kept up-to-date and are implemented by staff.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Leaders work effectively with other agencies, including the youth offending team and social services, to share information to help keep students safe. Referrals to the local authority about students' safety, when required, are made in a timely manner. Although they understand the risks of radicalisation and extremism, the wider staff team have not yet been trained about what to do if it is suspected that students are vulnerable to these.
- The school's leaders promote equality of opportunity effectively and students feel that they are equally valued. Students told inspectors, 'Everybody who comes here (to the school) is made to feel welcome.' School data about students' achievement show that students from different backgrounds perform equally well. Local authority representatives who place students at the school are happy with the provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
is of good quality and challenges leaders to constantly improve to ensure continued compliance with

the independent school standards

understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school because directors visit the school frequently and check a range of the school's work in detail

has a comprehensive understanding about the quality of teaching, data on the school's performance and the school's systems to manage the performance of staff, including any underperformance

ensures that resources are deployed effectively so that the quality of teaching and students' achievement are good

ensures that leaders carry out the necessary checks to help keep students safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. At times, students find it difficult to control their behaviour in this setting and can present very challenging behaviour. However, over time they make good progress in improving and controlling their behaviour.
- 'Before I came to this school I failed at everything. When I arrived here I couldn't look anybody in the eye. Those days are behind me now because of what this school has done for me. I'm working towards my GCSEs now.' The words of a student as she confidently looked an inspector in the eye. As a result of good progress being made in the development of students' self-control, they become more confident in themselves and better prepared to learn.
- Most students attend school regularly. Those who do not have usually joined the school very recently and are monitored very closely by staff. As time passes by, they become increasingly engaged in the life of the school and their attendance improves rapidly.
- Students usually show a good attitude to learning in lessons. Sometimes they become anxious about learning and remove themselves from lessons for short periods of time. However, when this happens they usually manage the situation effectively, and continue working away from the classroom with an adult or very quickly re-enter the classroom to continue with learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Staff ensure that students are well supervised at all times to ensure their own safety and that of others. Staff skilfully maintain a watchful eye on students, but also ensure that students are given the necessary space to develop the confidence and independence required, to make decisions for themselves and to learn to manage their own safety.
- All students spoken to by the inspector during the inspection said that they felt safe in the school. A number of students commented that strong relationships with their key worker, in particular, helped them to feel safe because they 'could tell them anything'.
- Students demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Students reported that bullying was not a problem in the school. However, responses from a questionnaire for students issued by the school recently showed that younger students, although not feeling that they were being bullied in school, said that they would not always feel comfortable telling an adult about bullying. The school's leaders have acted on this already and have devised an anti-bullying programme, which is part-led by some of the school's older students.
- The school's curriculum helps students to learn how to stay fit, healthy and safe. For example, a successful smoking cessation programme operates in the school and this has made a strong impact on reducing the number of students who smoke cigarettes. However, several students, who have recently joined the school, smoke cigarettes in the backyard area of the school. Staff tolerate this if students have been given parental permission to smoke. This is not appropriate for a school environment. For their own safety, and for the safety of others around them, students should not smoke cigarettes on the school site or during the school day.
- Effective security arrangements within the school and the school's well-maintained accommodation play

key roles in helping to keep students safe.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers effectively prioritise the development of students' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, helping them to make good progress. Teachers and other staff persevere when students present challenging behaviour and show determination to help students make the progress they are capable of. For example, in a mathematics lesson, some students became anxious when they realised that they would be learning something new. The teacher skilfully and patiently engaged them in revising learning that they were more comfortable with and then gradually introduced new learning points. By the end of the lesson, the students had made good progress in improving their understanding of the 24-hour clock.
- Students often begin the school with reading skills well below those expected for their age. They receive effective one-to-one support to help them to improve. Teachers and other staff select reading materials carefully for students to ensure an effective balance between age-appropriate content and the complexity of the language and text. As a result, students are appropriately challenged and make good progress in developing reading skills.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to gauge students' understanding and to ensure that lessons are planned at the right level for students. On rare occasions, where teachers realise that work is too easy or too hard for students, they adapt activities to provide a more appropriate level of challenge.
- Teachers and other staff provide students with verbal feedback about their learning during lessons. This is effective and helps students to make better progress. Teachers also mark students' work frequently. They recognise what students do well and praise them for this. However, they do not always identify the next steps for students to accelerate their learning further. In cases where the next steps in learning are identified, teachers do not consistently check that students have responded to their comments.
- Support staff play an important role in promoting students' good achievement. They usually intervene in learning in a timely manner, when required, to clarify students' understanding. On rare occasions, support staff try to do too much for students, for example, by immediately telling students how to spell words rather than letting them attempt it themselves first. When this occurs, opportunities for students to learn independently, and to become less reliant on adults to support their learning, are missed.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Work in students' books and school tracking data show that different groups of students, including those who are in the care of a local authority, achieve equally well at the school from their different starting points. This is because teachers understand students' needs and the quality of teaching is good.
- In 2014, all students who left the school at the end of Key Stage 4 went on to employment, apprenticeships or continued to be educated in other settings. This is an impressive outcome for students at the school. In recent years, almost all students have done the same, with few exceptions.
- Outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2014 show a slight drop in the proportion of students achieving grade C or above in English and mathematics at GCSE level. However, this masks the fact that students have made good progress from lower starting points than in 2013. Students also make good progress in entry level subjects including English, mathematics and physical education, and in BTEC subjects including home cooking skills and engineering.
- The school's most-able students achieve well. For example, in 2014 one student was supported effectively to achieve a grade A in the GCSE mathematics higher paper. In addition to this, some students in Key Stage 4 are learning German at GCSE level because they are performing well in the subject and have a natural talent for it.

- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. This is because an individual programme is designed for each student to help them to make the progress they are capable of. Students with statements of special educational needs receive the support they are entitled to. Early entry for GCSE papers is not used by the school.
- All parents and carers spoken to by the inspector believe that their child is making good academic progress, and strong progress in developing social skills and behaviour, at the school.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The school began to teach post-16 students from September 2014 for the first time since it opened in 2010. Two students currently attend the sixth form and are working to improve their GCSE grades.
- Although it is too early to judge the achievement students make in the sixth form over time, it is clear from students' work in different subjects that they have made good progress in learning since September 2014. This is a result of effective teaching. Students are motivated to learn and behave well. One student told inspectors: 'I have done really well since I came here but my GCSE grades weren't quite good enough to get me onto the course I wanted to start. I have come back to work hard and get the higher grades.'
- The effective leadership and management of the sixth form ensures that resources are managed well and students receive the necessary support to help them to build on their successful learning in Key Stages 3 and 4. Students continue to improve their behaviour and self-control in the sixth form as a result of effective teaching. Students in the sixth form usually serve as good role-models for younger students.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	136227
Inspection number	447296
DfE registration number	928/6073

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.

Type of school	Day special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	2
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	On Track Education Services limited
Chair	Jan Grayson
Headteacher	Pete Davies
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£15,840–£34,080
Telephone number	01604 645934
Email address	pdavies@ontrackededucation.com

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