

Education & Youth Services Ltd (Luton)

21-25 Adelaide Street, Luton, LU1 5BB

Inspection dates

30 June-2 July 2015

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

- The school is well led. It provides a safe and secure learning environment and students benefit from high standards of pastoral care.
- The school is successful in re-engaging students with their education and ensures that their attendance and attitudes to learning improve.
- Leaders know their students well, and are committed to providing high levels of individual support and encouragement.
- The governance of the school has strengthened, notably in the monitoring of teaching. There are greater opportunities for staff training and the sharing of good practice.
- Students make good progress because the standards of teaching are good. Teachers know their students well, and provide stimulating activities.
- The behaviour of the students is good. They show an increasing respect towards each other and adults, and there are positive relationships throughout the school community.
- The personal development of the students is good. They benefit from a broad and varied enrichment programme.
- Effective careers guidance means that an increasing proportion of students are moving on to higher education or into employment.
- The sixth form provision is good because it is successful in increasing students' aspirations and helps them to develop stronger independent learning skills.
- The curriculum strengthens the numeracy and literacy levels of the students and provides them with good vocational training opportunities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Information on attainment is not always used to best effect to promote students' progress.
- There is insufficient provision for higher level vocational courses.
- Teachers do not always provide activities that challenge the most able students, or opportunities for the less able to improve their writing skills.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with a day's notice.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead, representatives of the proprietors, and a group of teachers.
- The inspector met with a representative group of students, and took into account the views of a recent online questionnaire. The inspector also considered the seven staff questionnaires.
- Responses to the online Parent View questionnaire were too few for an analysis to be made.
- Six lessons were observed, some jointly with a senior leader.
- In checking the school's compliance with the independent school standards, a range of school documentation was scrutinised including curriculum planning, policy documents, health and safety records, risk assessments and examples of students' work.
- Information on students' achievement and evidence of the monitoring of teaching was also reviewed.
- Before the inspection, the inspector checked the school's arrangements for meeting the safeguarding standards, as identified on its website.

Inspection team

Richard Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is the school's first inspection since it opened in 2014. It is part of a group of 18 schools.
- It provides academic and vocational employment training for 29 students who have disengaged or are at risk of being excluded from mainstream education. Although it is registered for students between the ages of 14 and 18, all are currently aged 16 or over. A significant proportion of students transfer mid-year from other educational providers. All students receive external funding in order to attend the school.
- The school occupies a former office building in the centre of Luton, and makes use of nearby sports facilities for physical education.
- There are no students with disabilities or who have special educational needs. The proportion of students in care is above average.
- Students come from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds that reflect those to be found in the local area. None speak English as an additional language.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provider.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Implement a system to allow leaders to monitor the progress and attainment of groups of students more effectively.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers provide work that challenges the most able students
 - less able students are given further opportunities to develop their writing skills
 - teachers make the best use of opportunities to reinforce students' knowledge of grammar and spelling.
- Increase the provision of higher level vocational courses in order to meet the needs of students.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership team has worked hard to establish this new school and have successfully achieved good standards in all aspects of its provision. They have a clear vision of how it will continue to develop to meet the needs of the students that attend, and they have ensured that all the independent school regulations are met.
- Leaders have been highly successful in meeting their aim of establishing a positive relationship with students who have previous attendance and behavioural issues and re-engaging them with their education. This can be seen in the improved attendance and attitudes towards their learning. They ensure that there is equal opportunity to learn for all students, and that there is no discrimination.
- The development plan is based upon a realistic assessment of the school's current strengths, and clearly identifies areas of improvement. These include the recent changes to the way in standards of teaching are monitored. All teachers are regularly observed teaching, in addition to a scrutiny of written work and an analysis of individual progress data. Rigorous targets for improvement are set as a result of this process, which are linked to additional training opportunities. All outcomes are reviewed by senior leaders.
- The system to monitor students' achievement currently provides leaders with information on the progress of individual students. It is being revised, to allow the leaders to compare progress between different groups and subjects, but this is not yet implemented. The present arrangements do not provide a complete overview.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching thoroughly and this is leading to improvements due to the effectiveness of the recently introduced performance management system. This provides leaders with a greater awareness of the strengths of individual teachers. Teachers are supported by regular opportunities to share good practice with other schools within the group, as well attending relevant training and professional development courses.
- Leaders have successfully established and implemented rigorous procedures for the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of students, and staff and have ensured the site is secure.
- Due to the small size of the school, responsibility for subject leadership is shared between all teachers. They carry out this role effectively, and are keen to find ways in which their subject areas could be developed.
- The curriculum is generally well-matched to the needs of the students that attend. Early-entry GCSE is not undertaken. All students study English and mathematics to address any areas of weakness and ensure that secure foundations in numeracy and literacy are in place. Plans are well advanced to introduce the option of retaking these subjects at GCSE in order provide an additional opportunity to gain an important qualification.
- All students undertake a work skills course and at least two BTEC vocational courses in order to support a successful transition to employment. However, the level to which these can be studied is currently limited, reducing opportunities for students to enter higher education or apprenticeships. The school has recognised this, and is seeking the relevant accreditations.
- Leaders ensure that students receive good quality careers advice, and they are successful in providing work experience placements that are matched to the intended career choices of the students. They have made good use of the opportunities in the local area, for example linking with the travel-related businesses associated with the nearby airport. Their success can be seen in the increased proportion of students that progress into employment or further education courses.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is good. Students display a respect

for the different faiths represented in their community. Their improved behaviour reflects an increasing moral awareness. They demonstrate their increasing maturity and social skills in the way they interact with each other, and their topic work shows a growing understanding of other cultures.

- Leaders actively promote the fundamental values of individual liberty, the rule of law and democracy, tolerance and respect. Students are well-prepared for life in British society through an enrichment programme that covers topics such as criminal law, parliament, the welfare state and family values. Students have chances to debate ethical issues such as capital punishment, and showed their understanding of respecting opposing viewpoints in their study of the issues surrounding the recent general election.
- The views of students and staff about the leadership of the school are very positive. All those who responded felt that this school is led and managed well. Students are appreciative of the opportunity the school has given them for a new start, and describe its atmosphere as being like 'one big family, where we have to learn to get along with each other'.

■ The governance of the school:

The governance arrangements ensure the effective monitoring of standards, and provide support and challenge to the leaders. The proprietors have ensured that there is a clear and detailed development plan in place. The recent changes to the system for the performance management of teachers and the introduction of an improved system to monitor achievement demonstrate their intention to achieve high standards.

The processes by which the proprietors carry out their role of governance have recently been reviewed and strengthened. There are now frequent visits to check the work of the school for themselves, including understanding the quality of teaching and achievement, and ensuring that procedures for health and safety are followed rigorously. In addition, leaders provide the proprietors with detailed monthly reports of all aspects of the school's provision, which are carefully scrutinised.

The expertise in teaching within the other schools in the group provides a good resource. Joint training is arranged for groups of teachers and there are increased opportunities to share good practice.

The proprietors have effective systems to carry out the required annual review of safeguarding procedures, and to monitor their implementation.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of the students is good. Their conduct around the school is sensible and orderly. They show good levels of respect towards each other and their teachers. The school is kept clean and students demonstrate their care for their environment by taking turns to tidy up their common room area. In discussions, students are able to talk about their behaviour in a mature and reflective manner. They respond well to the way that staff in the school treat them as young adults.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. Students generally arrive promptly to lessons and settle down quickly. Relationships between teachers and students are very positive, and students follow instructions and usually apply themselves well. They sometimes display a lack of confidence in their learning ability, which can result in them being reluctant to attempt unfamiliar tasks. Teachers work hard to overcome this reluctance and increase their self-esteem.
- Most teachers are adept at ensuring that time in lessons is used productively. Students showed sensible behaviour and good co-operative learning skills during a session which simulated the effect of disabilities on people's attitudes and behaviour.
- The students benefit from high levels of pastoral support; this is notable strength of the school. Students report that school leaders and their tutors know them very well, enabling them to provide effective guidance and advice. There are excellent relationships, and the school is committed to ensuring that students' personal development needs are met. Students describe the school as a 'haven'.

- A scrutiny of the school's behaviour records indicates that serious incidents are rare, and managed effectively.
- Attendance is below the national average. This is often linked to students' previous educational history and attitudes. However, the school has been successful in managing this, so that attendance levels are rapidly improving. Students' individual circumstances are well known by staff. All absences are conscientiously followed up, and contact made with parents and carers in order to address any issues.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Safeguarding procedures are strong. The safeguarding policy meets the latest requirements, and is understood and followed by all members of staff. The school carries out all the relevant checks to ensure the suitability of adults to work with young people.
- The arrangements for health and safety are highly effective in creating a safe learning environment. There is a comprehensive range of policies, and these are implemented conscientiously by all staff. Thorough risk assessments are completed for all activities, including visits off site. Fire exit routes are well-marked and kept clear, equipment is tested and maintained at the appropriate intervals and evacuation practices carried out twice each term.
- The site is secure, and there are good processes in place to check and monitor visitors and record students entering and leaving the site. The school has suitable medical facilities, first aid boxes are located in key areas and staff have the appropriate first aid training. Students report that they feel safe.
- There is no evidence of any bullying, or prejudice in students' attitudes towards each other. They have a good understanding of the types of bullying they may encounter and how to deal with it.
- The school ensures that students know how to stay safe online, provides good advice on their personal security and relationships and the dangers surrounding substance abuse. Staff are alert to the potential dangers of extremism, and have recently received additional training in order to increase their awareness.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers know their students well and are adept at providing imaginative practical tasks that are well-matched to the interests of the students, thus engaging their attention.
- All students have an individual learning plan, which accurately identifies their strengths and key areas of development. Teachers make good use of this information in their planning, and there are regular tutorial meetings to review each student's progress. As a result, the students feel that they are actively involved in managing their own learning.
- All written work is regularly marked, and teachers give good written and oral feedback, indicating how to improve work in the future, in accordance with the school's marking policy. Teachers also provide students with individual targets, which are recorded on their learning plans. The students report that they find these helpful, and it engages them in their learning and is effective in promoting good progress.
- Teachers generally show a good awareness of the need to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills through their work in other subjects. For example in their vocational coursework, students are able to produce lengthy, clear and accurate written responses. A check of students work over time shows that occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to reinforce these skills by correcting poor grammar and spelling.
- Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject. They use resources well in their lessons, including those for information technology. This helps to develop stronger computing skills. Teachers make good use of educational visits to motivate students and support their learning.
- Teachers manage the behaviour of students well, and encourage them to adopt a positive attitude

towards their learning. The views of students about the standard of teaching are very positive. They provide considerable individual support, including time outside of lessons, to ensure that basic concepts are understood. Teaching assistants also make a valuable contribution. They liaise closely with teachers so that their interventions have a strong impact on students' learning.

- In addition to their formal assessments, teachers mostly review previous learning at the start of each lesson, and adjust their teaching accordingly. They use carefully targeted questioning in order to probe the understanding of individual students. Occasionally, teachers do not provide tasks to meet the needs of all students. Opportunities are sometimes missed for the more able to make additional progress through challenging work, for example, where they can apply their knowledge in practical situations. Conversely, some work for less able students is too easy and limits the development of their extended writing skills.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The prior attainment of students is low, in some cases far below the expectations for their age. This often reflects their previous educational background. However, the school's data shows that individuals are making good progress across all areas of their learning. This is supported by evidence from students' written coursework and assessments. The school has not operated sufficiently long for its examination results to be evaluated against national comparators.
- Achievement in vocational subjects is notably strong. The rate at which students successfully complete the BTEC vocational course units is increasing, indicating that students are making good progress. The rigour of these assessments is externally verified. Students themselves reported that they enjoy the opportunity to make a fresh start in these subjects, and apply themselves harder because they can see a direct relevance to their future employment opportunities. They indicate that they are keen to move on to higher level courses, in order to maintain their current rate of progress.
- The achievements of students that have been in care, and those who join the school mid-year, are good, and in line with those of their peers. Individual case studies show examples of rapid progress by students who have previously disengaged from their learning, and have benefited from the new start provided at this school.
- The most able students generally make good progress. This is most noticeable when they are given challenging extension tasks that allow them to extend their knowledge and apply it in practical situations.
- The school's focus on providing opportunities for students to relearn numeracy and literacy skills, and apply them in other subjects, ensures they consolidate their learning in these subjects and make good progress, although their levels are often below the expectations for their age.
- Students' learning skills are also improving. They complete lengthy independent learning tasks as part of their coursework. They show an understanding of how to present clear and balanced arguments, and their oral confidence is increasing as they are given frequent opportunities to express themselves during lessons.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The leadership and management of the sixth form provision is good. Students enter with few, if any, formal qualifications. Leaders have been successful in engaging with them, creating a safe and secure environment and providing opportunities for them to continue learning. Leaders know their students well in this small school and are aware of their educational and pastoral needs.
- The way that the staff treat the students as mature young adults helps to promote good standards of behaviour. This is notably successful in changing the negative attitudes held by some students as they come to appreciate the opportunities the school provides for them.

- The personal development of the students is good. They often arrive with low self-esteem, and respond positively to the pastoral care and guidance provided. The school is effective in promoting an increasing awareness of the institutions and values that underpin a tolerant multi-cultural society, and a willingness to understand and respect the views of others. The enrichment programme ensures students are well informed about potential risks, and broadens their financial understanding and cultural outlook.
- Students receive good quality careers advice, supported by work placements that are well matched to students' interests and potential employment opportunities. The school is successful in fostering in its students a positive outlook for their future.
- Teaching provides effective individual support for students. Students often lack confidence in their academic abilities, and teachers plan their lessons with a good awareness of this, providing activities that engage and motivate them. A few of these are too easy for individual students and do not extend their learning sufficiently.
- The achievements of the students are good. They make good progress, most notably in their vocational courses. As a result, many students indicate a desire to undertake more challenging, higher level courses than are currently offered by the school.
- Students demonstrate good independent learning skills. Their numeracy and literacy skills are improving, and they can apply these effectively in their other subjects when the opportunity is given.

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 GOV.UK website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	141014
Inspection number	462984
DfE registration number	821/6012
Type of school	Day
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	29
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	29
Number of part time pupils	3
Proprietor	Education & Youth Services Ltd
Chair	Amin Amiri
Headteacher	Tom Whitlock
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,625
Telephone number	01582 725832
Email address	info@eys.org.uk

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