

New Level Academy

The Pavilion, Milton Avenue, Stonebridge Recreation Ground, Middlesex NW10 8LW

Inspection dates

16–18 January 2018

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Requires improvement |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Learning is not planned well enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers consistently stretch and motivate pupils sufficiently. Consequently, pupils, especially the most able, do not reach the standards of which they are capable.
- The current arrangement for playing away football matches means that pupils regularly miss a full day's academic learning. This has a detrimental impact on their outcomes.
- The curriculum requires improvement. It does not meet the range of pupils' needs or broaden their future career options well enough.
- Most pupils arrive late to school. Very few are consistently punctual. As a result, the first lesson often starts late. Learning, for those who have arrived, is disrupted as pupils drift in at various times during the morning. This has a negative impact on pupils' learning.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders aspire to help pupils who have previously disengaged from their education to make a success of their future lives.
- Leaders are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school is starting to improve.
- Pastoral care is a particular strength. Members of staff encourage pupils to reflect on and improve their behaviours and attitudes.
- Pupils generally attend this alternative provision more regularly than they did their previous schools.
- The school's strong emphasis on team sports makes a positive contribution to pupils' well-being and personal development.
- Pupils get on well with each other. They feel safe in school and learn how to keep safe in different situations.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Leaders have ensured that the school is compliant with all the independent school standards.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - teachers planning learning activities that systematically build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding to ensure that they make consistently good progress
 - challenging pupils more, especially the most able, with work that stretches them to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by helping them to gain higher qualifications, especially in English and mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that teachers and other adults are well equipped to consistently motivate and engage pupils in lessons, changing arrangements for away sports matches so that pupils do not regularly miss a full day's academic learning
 - continuing to develop the curriculum so that it better meets pupils' needs and aspirations.
- Improve pupils' punctuality to school so that valuable learning time is not lost.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not secured a good standard of education for the pupils attending the school. One of the reasons for this is difficulties in recruiting enough suitably experienced and skilled members of staff.
- Leaders check on pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and punctuality every week. They use the progress information to set targets for teachers and hold them to account for their pupils' performance. They do not, however, provide teachers with sufficient and effective professional development opportunities to improve their teaching skills. A few also need additional help in behaviour management and motivational skills. As a result, pupils do not make good enough progress across the subjects.
- The school curriculum, despite the recent introduction of a vocational business studies course and some basic science in key stage 3, remains relatively narrow. This limits the range of pupils' possible future career options.
- The way in which leaders organise away games results in pupils regularly missing lessons for an entire day. This poor organisation means that pupils unnecessarily lose too much academic learning time.
- Nevertheless, the strong emphasis on football and sports makes a positive contribution to pupils' physical and mental well-being. It also teaches pupils skills such as teamwork and responsibility.
- Pupils are placed in this alternative provision because they were disengaged with education in their previous schools. This usually means that they had very poor attendance and demonstrated challenging behaviours. The proprietors established this school as they are fully committed to helping pupils change their lives. They are driven by a Christian view that all people have worth and value. Leaders successfully communicate this vision and it is shared by members of staff. The school is successful in helping pupils improve their self-worth, improve their behaviours and raise their aspirations for the future. Leaders have not been successful in making sure that pupils consistently arrive at school on time. This limits their learning and holds them back from reaching their potential.
- Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are beginning to address the weaknesses and are implementing their plans for improvement.
- School leaders have a strong regard for pupils' personal development, particularly through the effective programme of personal, social, health and economic education. Further, a recently introduced accredited course helps pupils understand how to manage their finances and develop sports leadership skills and youth mental first aid, for instance. Leaders enrich learning through organising visits such as to the Tate Modern and the Royal Law Courts. All these opportunities help pupils to learn about and respect all people, including those with protected characteristics, and prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

Governance

- The headteacher and a trustee are the proprietors. There is no governing body.

- The trustee brings his extensive experience of youth and community work to the school. He visits the school frequently, talking to pupils and members of staff, and observing teaching and learning. He and the headteacher are in close contact. The proprietors support and challenge each other well. They have a good understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve.
- The proprietors have ensured that the school meets the independent school standards and other requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Members of staff are trained in the latest guidance. They are aware of potential safeguarding issues and are vigilant in identifying any signs that raise concerns. In this small school, members of staff know all pupils well and readily communicate any welfare issues with their colleagues.
- The designated safeguarding leader has established strong working relationships with a range of local authority safeguarding teams, social workers and other external agencies. She also works closely with parents and carers to make sure that pupils are safe and their welfare is taken care of.
- The school's website is under construction. Printed copies of the safeguarding policy are available at the school office. The policy has regard to current government requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not strong enough to ensure that pupils make good progress across the subjects.
- Teachers do not plan sharply enough to enable pupils to systematically expand their knowledge, deepen their understanding or gain new skills. Teachers do not consistently set work that is hard enough, especially in challenging the most able. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress overall.
- Pupils' learning is also slowed because planned teaching time is lost through pupils' persistent lateness and missing lessons on away sports fixtures.
- There are a few occasions where teachers do not succeed in motivating pupils to pay consistent attention and concentrate on their learning.
- All of the above is limiting pupils' progression towards reaching higher standards and getting good qualifications, such as GCSEs in English and mathematics and merits in their vocational studies.
- Pupils arrive at different points of the year. Teachers test them on arrival in English and mathematics. Teachers use the information to set pupils, in groups, by their prior attainment. Teachers assess pupils' progress every week. Leaders have correctly identified that the current assessment system does not give them enough accurate information about pupils' gaps in learning. This limits teachers' abilities to tailor activities to meet pupils' learning needs. They are in the process of setting up a new system which is fit for purpose.

- In some lessons, there is a good rapport between adults and pupils. Teachers' expectations for good behaviour are high and pupils collaborate, try to learn well and achieve well. Planning is systematic and builds on pupils' prior learning.
- Some teaching makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. For example, in sports studies, pupils debated the morality of some of the behavioural choices that professional athletes make.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. As they settle into this alternative provision, pupils begin to believe that they can be successful learners. They gain self-confidence and start to work towards achieving their future career goals.
- Members of staff establish good relationships with the pupils. Pupils know that adults care about their safety and welfare. They know that adults will listen to their concerns and help them overcome any barriers to their future success. Equally, pupils say that members of staff support them to deal with any mental health or emotional difficulties they experience.
- Pupils get on well together. They say that there is no racism or bullying at the school. One told the inspector, 'We are a family here.' They feel safe in school and learn about how to stay safe in different situations. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about the dangers of grooming, carrying knives, gang membership, radicalisation and child sexual exploitation, for instance.
- Pupils have access to suitable information and guidance as they prepare for the transition to further education or training at the end of Year 11. They benefit from regular mentoring sessions to discuss their options, sessions on writing effective CVs and financial management seminars run by a city bank, for example. The careers teacher is arranging work placements for Year 11 pupils so that they can gain first-hand experience of the world of work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The majority of pupils arrive late on most days, some as much as two or more hours after the official start time. This is not only detrimental to their learning and progress but disruptive to their peers who have arrived punctually and are trying to learn.
- Over time, because of the support that adults give them in the school, pupils learn to understand that poor behaviour in the past has stopped them learning. Therefore, pupils improve their behaviour and develop positive attitudes to learning. There are occasions, however, where pupils in the earlier stages of settling into the school disrupt learning. Teachers mostly deal with this effectively, but occasionally other pupils join in and valuable learning time is lost while they settle down.
- Almost all pupils who join this school had very low attendance at their previous schools. Because of the nurturing environment in this school, pupils attend more often, with a few rarely missing a day.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils join this school because they were disengaged in their previous schools, attending rarely and displaying challenging behaviours, leading to their exclusion. They made little progress in their learning. As a result, they enter this school with standards that are below those expected for their age.
- The very few Year 11 pupils who left the school last year made adequate progress from the time that they joined the school. They left with functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics and a level 1 Sport BTEC National Diploma. Most went on to study at post-16 colleges.
- Current pupils' overall progress requires improvement. This is because too much learning time is lost owing to pupils' poor punctuality and away sports fixtures, and because teaching is not consistently good.
- A small number of pupils are making good progress in some subjects. More, however, especially the most able, could make better progress to attain GCSEs in English or mathematics, and higher-level vocational qualifications.
- School leaders introduced the teaching of a BTEC in business at the start of this term, which all pupils are studying. It is too soon to judge the progress that pupils are making in this course.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 142832 |
| DfE registration number | 304/6003 |
| Inspection number | 10041406 |

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| Type of school | Alternative provision |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 13 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 10 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | 2point4 FM Ltd |
| Chair | Terence Springer |
| Headteacher | Terence Springer |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £75 per day |
| Telephone number | 020 8838 3529 |
| Website | www.nelevelacademy.org.uk [under construction] |
| Email address | info@newlevelacademy.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- In February 2017, the school was granted registration for 16 pupils aged from 13 to 19 years. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- There are currently no pupils registered at the school for post-16 education.
- The school is run by 2point4 FM, a social enterprise led by two trustees. It is part of Tokyngton Manor Football Club and located within their buildings at Stonebridge Recreation Ground.
- The school caters for pupils with a history of disrupted schooling, including those with

behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The pupils who attend the school have been referred by their previous schools or different London local authorities. Pupils join at various points during the academic year.

- No pupils have an education, health and care plan or are looked after by their local authority.
- The school has a Christian ethos.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Learning was observed in six lessons; one was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised. The school's information about pupils' progress was also checked.
- The inspector spoke to the headteacher, leaders, teachers and the trustee. There was also a formal discussion with three pupils and various informal discussions with pupils during breaktimes and in lessons.
- The inspector took account of the three responses to the questionnaire for staff. There were no responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.
- The inspector considered documentation, policies and all aspects of the school's work, to check compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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