

# Right Choice Independent Special School

First Floor, 1-4 Beresford Square, Woolwich, London SE18 6BB

## Inspection dates

5–7 June 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The school leaders ensure that all the independent school standards are met and that the school continues to improve.
- The school provides its pupils with a good education. Pupils start to re-engage with learning and make good progress.
- Most pupils who leave from Year 11 go on to a college course or an apprenticeship. Other pupils on short-term placements return successfully to their mainstream schools.
- Teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses well and this helps them to plan interesting lessons. Sometimes the level of challenge is not high enough.
- Staff work effectively to help pupils to learn to manage their behaviour. Individual difficulties are not allowed to disrupt lessons for other pupils.
- The curriculum has been broadened to include a wider range of courses including more GCSE subjects.
- The school works closely with a range of other organisations to provide worthwhile and relevant vocational courses in areas such as music, sport and motor vehicle maintenance.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know how to stay safe outside school and when online.
- The school works well with families to improve attendance. Most pupils start to attend more regularly but there are still too many persistent absentees.
- In English and mathematics, pupils have good opportunities to improve their basic skills. This is not yet happening consistently enough across all subjects.
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal development. The range of enrichment opportunities help pupils to realise what they can achieve.
- The partnership with parents and carers is strong. Parents are very supportive of the school, and all that it does to give their children a second chance.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 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 making sure that:
  - the work is sufficiently challenging to enable all pupils to make good or better progress
  - pupils more fully develop their literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects.
- Further develop the work on improving attendance, particularly in relation to persistent absentees.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher, who is also one of the proprietors, and senior team provide good leadership. They work well together as a team to ensure that the school continues to improve and to meet all the independent school standards.
- Their commitment to a second chance underpins everything the school does. Leaders rarely 'give up' on a pupil. They work hard to provide individual and flexible programmes to help disaffected pupils to re-engage with education. They are creative in finding ways to work with pupils and convince them of the benefits of gaining recognised qualifications.
- Staff are also very committed to the school's philosophy. Their different roles in teaching, behaviour management and counselling complement each other well. They understand how these roles contribute to the success of the school in meeting pupils' needs.
- The regular monitoring of teaching and learning helps leaders to ensure that pupils are making good progress. Teachers and support staff benefit from effective training and support. This helps them to keep up to date with the changes to the school curriculum and the expectations for assessing pupils' progress.
- The relatively new tracking system provides useful information about pupils' attainment, progress and attendance. The system helps to ensure that additional support and resources are used to maximum effect, but is not yet being used as well as it could be, particularly in relation to attendance.
- The feedback from parents shows that they are highly supportive of what Right Choice is doing for their children. They particularly appreciate the care that staff take of their children and the speed with which they are kept informed. One parent commented that the school is flexible about meeting individual needs, but there are boundaries which pupils understand.
- The school has broadened its curriculum considerably since the previous inspection and pupils have more opportunities to take different subjects. GCSE courses are now offered in English, mathematics, science, information and computer technology, religious studies, art, French, and leisure and tourism.
- Pupils can also take a range of vocational courses which lead to recognised BTEC qualifications and prepare them for well for life beyond school. These include work with Thamesmead Town FC, Street Vibes, Hadlow College and the Archways project.
- These courses give pupils really worthwhile experience in sport, music, motor vehicle maintenance and animal husbandry and enable them, if they wish, to continue at college or in an apprenticeship after they leave school. Leaders visit the external provision regularly to make sure that it meets pupils' needs.
- Pupils are very well prepared for life in Britain through personal, social and health education (PSHE), work-related learning and careers education. These promote equality of opportunity and encourage respect for and tolerance of others. In PSHE pupils learn about British values such as tolerance, respect for the rule of law and

also about the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. A recent visit to the Houses of Parliament helped pupils to have a better understanding of how democracy works.

## **Governance**

- The proprietors are strongly committed to providing a high-quality education which helps pupils to overcome their difficulties and move on to worthwhile careers and fulfilling lives.
- The good partnership between the proprietors and the staff is focused on ensuring that pupils make the best possible progress in terms of both their personal development and their academic attainment.
- The proprietors ensure that school premises are kept in good condition and that classrooms are suitable for teaching. The school has no outdoor space, but pupils benefit greatly from twice-weekly access to local leisure facilities where they enjoy a range of sports and physical activities, including football, dance and tennis.
- Parents receive detailed guidance on the school's expectations. Currently this is all paper-based as the school's website is being rebuilt.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders promote a strong safeguarding culture. They ensure that all staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The safeguarding policy is made available to all parents. Pupils, parents and staff all agree that pupils are safe in school.
- Staff responsible for safeguarding make sure that they check rigorously the suitability of staff and visitors to work with pupils and that all the required pre-employment checks are made.
- Leaders make sure that all training in safeguarding and child protection is up to date so that staff know how to keep pupils safe in school. Records of training are up to date.
- Pupils are well supervised in school and when off-site. Staff supervise pupils throughout the day to ensure their safety and well-being and assess any potential risks effectively, particularly where this involves using other sites. Staff in the off-site provision are kept informed of any potential issues.
- Leaders maintain regular contact with the local agencies involved in child protection and safeguarding and ensure that locally agreed procedures are implemented.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teaching is typically good and most pupils respond positively to the small-group or individual teaching. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to take account of pupils' ability, attainment and interests.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to check what pupils know and to move learning on.

Together with learning support assistants, they provide good individual support but sometimes the expectations for what pupils could achieve are not high enough to ensure that all pupils make really good progress.

- In English, regular practice helps pupils to improve their reading and writing skills. Pupils are sometimes reluctant to write and teachers provide many opportunities to encourage them. Similarly, in mathematics, teachers plan work which enables pupils to apply their knowledge and skills in practical ways to help them to build their confidence.
- There are opportunities for pupils to practise literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, following an interesting discussion on being a good citizen, pupils were using the points they had made as the basis of their written work. This is not yet done consistently enough across all lessons to help pupils become really confident and accurate.
- The teaching in the vocational subjects is also good because expectations are clear and tasks are well designed. For example, on the hair and beauty course pupils' practical skills are supported by an understanding of the theory. Former pupils have gone on to have successful careers in the industry.
- Due attention is given to teaching pupils about the importance of safety, for example in the motorcycle maintenance classes, learning about safe working practices and safer riding are both key elements of the programme.
- Teachers provide parents with regular information on their children's progress. As well as written reports, tutors contact parents regularly to update them on how well their children are doing. Parents really appreciate the positive feedback as well as knowing quickly about any problems.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships between staff, pupils and families are very good. Staff know pupils and their families very well and understand how individual circumstances may affect behaviour and attitudes. They are prepared to be flexible in approach and tailor what they provide to meet individual needs. As a result, pupils and families feel that they can trust the school.
- Pupils' welfare is taken very seriously and pupils know that there are staff who will support them and provide counselling and support to help them get back on track. They know that they will genuinely be given a second chance. Parents also feel well supported. They say that they are listened to and that their views are valued.
- Pupils have access to excellent personal and careers guidance. They are introduced to a wide range of opportunities and are helped to understand what they need to do to gain a place at college or employment. The guidance encourages them to have high aspirations for their future.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility, for example when working with the catering manager and on the vocational courses such as the sports leadership qualifications.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are given good advice on how to stay safe

outside school. The work in PSHE is strongly focused on helping them to deal with issues which may affect them. A very good session on 'being a good citizen' helped pupils to consider a range of issues around gangs, radicalisation and extremism as well as the importance of democratic institutions.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour is well managed, with very clear expectations which pupils and parents understand. The emphasis is very much on helping pupils to take responsibility for, and learn to manage, their own behaviour. Pupils like the positive approach but also understand that their actions may have consequences which include sanctions, for example not being allowed to participate in an activity or a visit because they cannot be trusted to behave sensibly.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is generally good. Poor behaviour is not allowed to disrupt the education of others and is quickly dealt with. Bullying is not tolerated and neither pupils nor parents expressed any particular concerns. Pupils say that generally they relate well to each other and that staff deal quickly with any issues that arise.
- Most pupils join Right Choice with a history of poor attendance. Most improve their attendance but some do not understand why regular attendance is important. Staff work hard with pupils and their families to persuade pupils to come into school or attend the alternative provision regularly and on time. Pupils who are taught at home are expected to be ready for the sessions when their tutor arrives.
- Absence is recorded electronically and staff are starting to analyse the information which the programme can provide. This is not yet being used systematically enough, for example to help spot issues which may be emerging and help the school to take preventative action.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Most pupils join Right Choice with low levels of attainment for their age because their education has been disrupted. Many of them have been out of school for some time. Pupils make good progress overall and most Year 11 pupils successfully complete functional skills examinations in English and mathematics as well as vocational examinations.
- Wherever possible, pupils also take GCSE subjects but the number of pupils involved is too small to allow valid comparison with national standards. All these courses provide them with a good foundation for further study at college or an apprenticeship.
- Pupils who attend Right Choice because they have been excluded, or are at risk of exclusion, from school usually make good progress from their starting points. The vast majority are able to return successfully to a mainstream school or an appropriate specialist placement.
- Most pupils make good progress in English and mathematics but some pupils are not always challenged enough to achieve more highly. Opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills are not consistent enough across the curriculum.
- Almost all pupils in Year 11 move on to a sixth form or further education college or an

apprenticeship and almost all pupils complete the courses they choose. A few pupils return to Right Choice for an extra year to enable them to gain more of the knowledge and skills they need to enable them to take a course in their chosen career.

## School details

Unique reference number	134402
DfE registration number	203/6300
Inspection number	10035802

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.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	12 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Right Choice Project Co. Ltd
Chair	Christine Easterbrook
Headteacher	Banjo Aromolaran
Fees (day pupils)	£17,000 to £30,000
Telephone number	020 8854 6229
Website	<a href="http://www.rcpc.co.uk">www.rcpc.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:rcp@rcpc.co.uk">rcp@rcpc.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	18–20 March 2014

## Information about this school

- Right Choice Independent Special School is a mixed, independent day school for pupils with complex behavioural problems. A few pupils are referred to Right Choice Independent Special School by other schools, but the vast majority are referred by their local authority. The school aims to give pupils a second chance 'to discover and realise their potential by providing a variety of services aimed at reducing social, emotional, psychological barriers to learning and achievement'.
- The school opened in 2003. It is registered for 45 students aged 12 to 18 years. There are currently 43 pupils on roll, aged 12 to 18 years, almost all of whom are in the 11 to 16 age range. There are currently too few pupils of sixth form age to report separately on

their attainment and progress.

- The school works in partnership with a number of other projects and agencies, including Archways, Thamesmead Sports Centre, Street Vibes, Hadlow College and Ilderton. These provide vocational courses in areas such as motor vehicle maintenance, sports studies, music and animal husbandry.
- Many of the pupils have an education and health care plan, mainly for emotional and behavioural issues but also for other reasons such as autistic spectrum disorder, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder and school refusal.
- A number of pupils attend for a short time as the result of a fixed-term exclusion from their main school or while the local authority's Fair Access Panel decides where they should be educated.
- The school has no outdoor space and therefore uses a local park and sports centre for physical education and games.
- The school was last inspected in March 2014.

## Information about this inspection

- The school was given one day's notice of inspection.
- The inspector visited a range of lessons and activities accompanied by the headteacher or another senior member of staff. The inspector held discussions with students, staff and parents, and reviewed the school's policies and procedures, including those dealing with child protection. She visited two of the off-site locations used by the school. She also met with the school's careers adviser and two representatives of the local authority who are responsible for monitoring the progress of pupils placed in the school.
- The responses of nine staff, 10 parents and carers and 10 pupils to a questionnaire were considered. There were too few responses on Ofsted's Parent View website to consider.

## Inspection team

Grace Marriott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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