

New Hall Project 20/20

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	332/6004
Unique Reference Number	134458
Inspection number	301572
Inspection dates	6-7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrew McDowall HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

New Hall 20/20 is registered to provide alternative provision for up to ten students in the age range 13-16 who are not succeeding in main stream education and have been or are in danger of being excluded from school. The school bases much of its work on the theatre and the performing arts and offers students access to qualifications in community theatre and basic skills. Currently there are six students attending the school, one has a statement of educational need. Most students have experienced disrupted education. The range of ability is very wide but in general the students attain at levels below those expected nationally. When they start at the school many have low self-esteem and poor attitudes to learning. The school was first registered in January 2001.

Evaluation of the school

New hall 20/20 provides a good quality of education for its students. Through a focus on the theatre and the performing arts it successfully reintegrates young people into education, helps them to improve their behaviour and move on to further education or training. The school meets most of the regulations relating to independent schools. The way in which the school attends to the care, welfare, health and safety of the students is satisfactory.

Quality of education

The school provides a good quality of education that is successful in enabling disaffected students to re-engage with learning and attend school regularly. The key reason for this success is the good curriculum provided by the school. Because many of the students are only at the school for a relatively short time, the school takes a flexible approach to curriculum planning that is successful in meeting the needs of the students. The strong emphasis the school gives to the performing arts provides the students with a vehicle, through which they grow in confidence, develop self discipline and see themselves as successful in school. The school performances are a key element of the curriculum and are used effectively by the school to provide a broad and balanced programme of work for each student. The regular school productions and film making are of a good quality and are used very well to promote cross curricular work. Through their involvement in all stages of the writing, planning

and performing of school productions and film-making the students make satisfactory progress in their literacy, numeracy, design, construction, information and communication technology (ICT) and science skills. These activities help the students to develop the skills they will need to access further training or find work. There are few school clubs, but productions see pupils give willingly of their time after school to finish building the set or to attend rehearsals. There is also a residential visit each year to a youth drama festival.

Skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are also addressed satisfactorily through separate lessons that lead to qualifications in a range of accredited awards for key skills. In addition, the students are provided with opportunities to work towards accredited qualifications in the Community Theatre Course and Open College Network awards. All students gain accredited awards and those who have been at the school for some time have high expectations and a clear picture of what they want to do. Overall the students make good progress because they do well in improving their behaviour and attitude to learning which helps them to re-engage with education and training.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory overall. The quality of assessment varies from subject to subject and some of the teaching does not take account of the different abilities in the class. The ways in which all the staff manage and improve behaviour are very good.

The teaching of the performing arts is good and provides students with practical activities that relate well to real problems and situations. This is not always the case in discrete literacy and numeracy lessons, where some of the work relies too heavily on worksheets. Assessment of the Community Theatre Course is good where portfolios of work are well managed. These include good examples of self assessment and demonstrate the good progress students make in this area. Assessment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall. The students receive verbal feedback on what they need to do to improve and the staff have a sound understanding of where each student is in their learning. However, the quality of marking is variable. Some students are not provided with enough written comments on the progress they are making and students' work in literacy and numeracy is not stored in a way that enables them to easily reflect on their own progress over time.

Teachers have a good understanding of the abilities of the students and take account of this well when allocating tasks in the performing arts lessons. This is not always the case in more formal lessons where all students are sometimes set the same work. Those who need additional support in reading writing and mathematics do not receive the highly structured individual programmes of work they need to make good progress.

The quality of relationships in the school are very good. The students value the respectful way they are treated by the staff and in return try to control and improve their language and behaviour. The students receive regular guidance from the Connexions service and all agencies work well together to ensure the students are

well informed about their next steps into further education and training. Suitable work placements are found for the majority of students.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of the students is good. They make very good progress in their personal and social development during their time at the school. The work in the creative arts is challenging to the students who have had limited experience of performing. They generally respond well to this new approach to learning and become involved. The practical problems associated with staging a production promote self discipline and the students learn to work well as members of a team. This, along with the satisfactory progress they make in their learning enables them to become better prepared to move into the world of work or further training. The students are very enthusiastic and proud of their contributions to past productions. As one student said, 'I get a real buzz from performing'. Their enjoyment of school is illustrated by the significant improvement in the attendance of most students. The students say that their behaviour has improved at this school and it is generally good. Students are actively involved in setting and reviewing the school rules and they all have personal targets for improvement.

An undoubted strength of the school is the way in which social issues that are addressed through the school performances are used very well to provide the students with opportunities to consider the lifestyle choices they make. The school makes good use of external agencies to support the work in personal, social, health and citizenship education. Matters relating to sex education and relationships are well supported through individual counselling and support. The school undertakes commissions from local schools and these provide the students with opportunities to work with others and gain a good understanding of their place in the community. Issues relating to racial harmony and tolerance between communities are successfully addressed through the work in the performing arts, by producing work on topics such as asylum, terrorism and immigration.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

There several good features to the care and welfare of students, but provision overall is only satisfactory because there is a weakness in the level of supervision at break times. Students are sometimes unsupervised outside the building. Almost all other policies and procedures are in place and fully implemented. The exception being that the school has no written policy relating to the health and safety of students on educational visits, but it does undertake the necessary risk assessments for these activities. The school has good procedures relating to fire safety and has implemented all the recommendations and advice received in a report from the local fire service. The proprietors are trained in safeguarding students and all staff are fully aware of the school policy and procedures in this area.

Healthy living is promoted through the curriculum and the important issues of substance abuse are addressed well. However, the school is not consistent in its attitude to smoking, as this is tolerated on the school site. Because the relationships in the school are very good the students express great confidence in the staff. They say they can talk about any problems they are having and feel they are listened to. There are good links with other agencies working with the students to ensure they are receiving the support they need.

The school has not prepared a written access plan that meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school fully complies with the regulations relating to the checks it makes on employees regarding their identity and suitability to work with children.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is housed in a single storey building that has been used for a range of community activities in the past. The present proprietors have improved the internal decoration. The hall is well suited to the range of creative activities that the school provides, but the lack of windows and ventilation make it stuffy in warm weather. The school makes use of other accommodation at the local youth centre to provide access to a computer suite. The toilets are clean and well maintained. However, they do not meet requirements as male and female toilets are currently in the same room. There is no suitable room for pupils to use when they are feeling ill. Outside play space on the school site is very limited, but the school compensates for this by making satisfactory use of the adjoining park to provide opportunities for physical activities.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school handbook includes useful information to parents and carers about what it provides and meets all requirements. The school has regular contact with parents and many see the work of the school by attending performances each term. There are suitable termly reports to parents that let them know how well their children are doing. Although the school does provide a breakdown of how funding provided by the local authority is spent, this is not individualised for each student.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school complaints procedure fully meets requirements. The policy is clear and outlines the procedures, responsibilities and timescales relating to how complaints will be resolved.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- ensure lessons are well planned, effective teaching methods and suitable activities are used and class time is managed wisely (paragraph 1(3)(c))
- ensure teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensure these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- establish a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly in literacy and numeracy and ensure information from such assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school which has regard to DfES guidance *Health and safety of pupils on educational visits* (reference HSPV2) (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- ensure school are staff deployed in such a way as to ensure the proper supervision of pupils (paragraph 3(7)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide sufficient separate washrooms for pupils, which take account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k))
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l))
- ensure the ventilation in the classroom is satisfactory and in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(p)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- ensure that where a pupil who is registered at the school is wholly or partly funded by the local authority, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is submitted to the local authority and on request to the Secretary of State (paragraph 6(7)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

School details

Name of school	New Hall Project 20/20		
DfES number	332/6004		
Unique reference number	134458		
Type of school	Independent Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1 st January 2001		
Age range of pupils	13-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 5	Girls: 1	Total: 6
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£11,403		
Address of school	Huntingtree Park Building Huntingtree Road Halesowen West Midlands B63 4HY		
Telephone number	01215 500006		
Email address	newhall1@btconnect.com		
Headteacher	Ms A O'Reilly		
Proprietor	Ms a O'Reilly and Ms M Sidaway		
Reporting inspector	Andrew McDowall HMI		
Dates of inspection	6-7 June 2007		