

Right Choice Project

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	203/6300
Unique Reference Number	134402
Inspection number	301592
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Declan McCarthy

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

Right Choice Project (RCP), situated in Woolwich, London, is a day school which functions as a pupil referral unit. It caters for pupils aged 14-16 years with a variety of needs including unaccompanied minors who arrive into the country and are placed into social care, those for whom English is a second language, those who are unable to access a mainstream school placement and those with social emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) who may have associated mild learning difficulties. The intake from one year to the next is highly variable so that the cohort changes considerably each year. Currently 17% of pupils have English as an additional language, 50% of pupils referred during this academic year did not have a school place and half of the pupils have statements of special educational need (mainly for SEBD). The school is housed in a four storey building in Woolwich town centre, occupying the same site as its sister provision for post-16 students. Most of the current pupils have histories of previous educational failure and nearly all have arrived at RCP disengaged from learning, with histories of exclusion, dysfunctional behaviour or school phobia. A significant minority are known to the Youth Offending Team and a few have mild mental health problems. Most pupils are referred by mainstream secondary schools and the remainder by the local authority. Most of the 35 pupils on roll are 'dual registered' at this and another school and arrive at this school in Years 10 or 11 with a few admitted in Year 9. The school was registered in 2004 and moved premises in January 2005. This is RCP's first full inspection.

Evaluation of the school

The school's judgement that it provides a good quality of education is confirmed by this inspection and also reflected in the views of parents, pupils' referring secondary schools, multi-professional agencies and the wider community. Pupils learn effectively and make good progress in their accredited courses because both the curriculum and the quality of teaching are good. Pupils' personal development, is good, mainly as a result of the effective care, support and guidance they receive. The school meets all of the regulations and uses its self-evaluation to further develop and improve its provision.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good, offering a wide range of learning experiences for all pupils. The curriculum fully meets the diverse range of pupils' needs, including those with statements of special educational need and those for whom English is an additional language. There is a wide range of accredited City and Guilds courses enabling pupils to gain a range of qualifications on leaving the school. Subjects are well planned and learning is considerably enriched by strong links within the local community, for example with Charlton Athletic Football Club where pupils benefit from sports coaching. Strong links with local businesses enable some pupils to take up apprenticeships on leaving school. Pupils' achievements throughout the school are good. Pupils in Year 10 gain Level 1 grades in a range of City and Guilds subjects which are equivalent to the lower GCSE grades, and pupils in Year 11 successfully achieve City and Guilds Level 2 grades, which are equivalent to GCSE A* to C grades. Pupils particularly enjoy music, information and communication technology (ICT) and sports. For example, pupils successfully participated in the *'Met-Track'* sporting event organised by the Metropolitan Police at Sutcliffe Park.

The school also has strong links with local schools, colleges and the Connexions service. For example, pupils use high quality ICT facilities at the City Learning Centre at a local secondary school on Friday mornings. They transfer successfully to the colleges or other placements of their choices on leaving RCP. They receive good careers guidance to facilitate their entry into employment or apprenticeships. Although the curriculum policy of RCP states that the pupils' mainstream schools are responsible for organising work experience for those pupils who are dual registered, the school provides work experience placements for pupils who are not dual registered. Therapy, one-to-one teaching support for pupils who are at early stage of learning English and counselling are available during the school day. All of these help pupils to re-engage with learning so that they make good progress.

Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and receive effective support in lessons from learning support assistants. As a result, pupils' learning is good and they acquire new skills quickly. Behaviour is managed well. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and as a result pupils show respect, listen carefully and follow instructions. Parents and pupils agree that classroom teaching is good and this is confirmed by this inspection. Effective individual support on a one-to-one basis is provided for those who need it, such as pupils at an early stage of learning English. Consequently, all pupils enjoy full access to learning at their own individual level. Nevertheless, during the inspection a few pupils said that their work was too easy and they would welcome more challenging work. Pupils enjoy learning because learning activities are practical and interesting for them. Pupils also receive praise, encouragement and positive feedback from staff which motivates them to try harder. Teachers make good use of a range of high quality resources and a variety of teaching approaches, including practical investigations in various subjects and the use of ICT in music. Pupils research widely

using the internet and use ICT to complete and illustrate their coursework, which is generally well presented.

Assessment systems are good and they are well used by teachers to promote learning. Pupils are actively involved in assessing their own progress and sometimes that of their peers within their course modules. Individual learning plans, which involve pupils and parents in target setting, have recently been devised for pupils. Most teachers set clear learning objectives at the beginning of lessons so that pupils know what they should achieve, although these are not always reviewed systematically with pupils at the end of individual lessons. However, teachers always review the outcomes of each series of lessons and incorporate the results in planning the next stage of learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their behaviour in lessons and around school is good and they have positive attitudes to learning. All the pupils who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that they enjoy coming to school and pupils clearly respect the building and displays. Pupils respond well to routines and the disciplinary code, respecting adults and handling equipment properly and safely. A clear code of conduct and effective links with the community police officer and community groups promote social awareness and help pupils to distinguish between right and wrong. Pupils develop a good sense of moral values through exploring current affairs topics such as the activities of the Taliban and the nature of gang culture. There are good opportunities for teamwork and discussions to develop sharing and turn-taking. The benefits were evident, for example during break times when pupils willingly took turns to use the pool table.

The ethos of care, support and respect for the individual ensures that pupils do well. Counselling, art and music therapy, and good teaching all help to raise pupils' self-esteem. The graduation day is a special occasion where pupils dress formally and parents and the local community are invited. This has a major impact on raising self-esteem through the recognition and reward of pupils' achievement throughout the year. Curriculum topics, for example, the City and Guilds Wider Key Skills Option '*Working with Others*', '*Problem Solving*' and '*improving own learning and performance*' effectively promote pupils' sense of responsibility, enabling them to show initiative and contribute to community life. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through, for example, volunteer work in a local primary school. They leave school adequately prepared for the next stage in their lives, having acquired qualifications in basic skills and an awareness of the world of work. They acquire a good knowledge of public institutions such as the emergency services through the City and Guilds Wider Options programmes. All pupils learn how to open a bank account. Their insights into their own and other cultures are promoted well through music, through the celebration of their own identities and the celebration of festivals such as Chinese New Year.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. There is a suitable range of policies that guide this aspect of the school's work. First aid and child protection policies are in place and all staff are scheduled to participate in up-dated 'safeguarding' training this term. The headteacher/proprietor, who is the named child protection officer, has attended child protection and health and safety training in accordance with the most recent guidance. Staff carry out rigorous checks to ensure pupils' safety, and pupils learn to adopt safe practices. Staff provide good pastoral care and all incidents of inappropriate behaviour are properly recorded.

Pupils are taught about healthy lifestyles and the school goes the 'extra mile' by ensuring pupils' access to chilled water on demand and also a supply of fresh fruit. Pupils learn how to prepare healthy meals at school. Communication between the school and pupils' homes, local secondary schools and colleges is good.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Effective procedures are in place for the recruitment and appointment of staff. All the required checks are carried out to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.

School's premises and accommodation

The school occupies the ground floor of a four storey building, providing three classrooms of appropriate size with ample storage space, a staff room and offices for administration and meetings. Pupils have access to a local park for outdoor play and to leisure facilities nearby where they receive sports coaching.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The prospectus contains all the necessary information about the school and is readily available to parents. The school sends detailed reports to parents on the progress and achievements of their children. Information is provided to the referring schools of 'dual registered' pupils and their parents for the purposes of annual reviews of statements of special educational need. The school also provides an annual account of income and expenditure to the local authority.

Procedures for handling complaints

The complaints procedure is clear and contains all of the information that it should. It also provides guidance for parents to appeal against the grades awarded in City and Guilds examination results.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005 and complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Provided more challenging examination courses for the few higher attaining pupils
- ensure that all teachers specify clear learning outcomes for pupils at the beginning of lessons and review them at the end of each lesson.

School details

Name of school	Right Choice Project		
DfES number	2036300		
Unique reference number	134402		
Type of school	Pupil referral unit		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	19 April 2004		
Age range of pupils	14-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 22	Girls: 9	Total: 31
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 2	Girls: 2	Total: 4
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 13	Girls: 4	Total: 17
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 4	Girls: 0	Total: 4
Annual fees	£ 7,200		
Address of school	132-134 Powis Street Woolwich London SE18 6NL		
Telephone number	0208 8546229		
Email address	banjo@rcpc.co.uk; ursula@rcpc.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Banjo Aromolaran		
Proprietors	Mr Banjo Aromolaran and Ms Ursula Grant		
Reporting inspector	Mr Declan McCarthy		
Dates of inspection	26-27 April 2007		