

On Track Training Centre (Mildenhall)

Independent Special School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	935/6083
Unique Reference Number	127003
Inspection number	332460
Inspection dates	5 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Karin Heap

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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

On Track Training Centre in Mildenhall is an independent special school, registered for students aged 11 to 18. Currently there are 17 students (in the 11 to 16 age range) on roll of both genders who are placed at the school by two local authorities. Ten of the students have statements of special educational needs, which include specific learning difficulties and social communication difficulties including dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism. All students have social and emotional difficulties and prior to their admission to the school they were excluded from mainstream education. There are five students who are looked after; no students have English as their second language.

The school's mission is to provide students with a sense of personal success and positive achievement in their personal and academic skills. It aims to develop positive attitudes to learning and prepare students with diverse skills and knowledge for adult life. Students are taught through individualised learning approaches using selected elements from the National Curriculum and external accreditation.

The school also provides outreach provision and alternative education for a further four students. Five additional members of staff deliver this service, which was not part of this inspection. The school was last inspected in April 2006.

Evaluation of the school

On Track Training offers good quality education. Relative to their complex social and emotional needs behaviour improves well over time and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are strong relationships between students and adults and the school creates a positive learning environment where students make good progress. Teachers and support staff are very dedicated and skilled and teaching is good overall. The school provides an individualised curriculum, which meets the needs of students effectively. The school has developed well since the last inspection with improved assessment and tracking procedures and good

provision for welfare, health and safety. The school meets most of the regulations and specific accommodation issues such as an appropriate number of wash facilities, a room for students who are sick and an outside recreation area will be fully addressed when the school moves to a new and larger site.

Quality of education

On Track Training provides a good quality of education. The learning environment is appropriately flexible and versatile and there are plans in place to move to a new and larger site in the summer term to further improve provision and the range of activities.

The school offers a good, flexible and appropriate curriculum in line with its philosophy and aims. There is a balanced range of learning activities, which meet the needs of all learners well. It includes elements selected from the National Curriculum and has particular strengths in art and design, literacy, physical activity and practical learning. Students show good aptitude and enthusiasm for the practical subjects. For example in art and design students' work folders show good evidence of progress and creative learning. Students enjoy, appreciate and value the more relaxed learning approach in school. Most feel their learning has improved since they have joined this school. Social and cultural elements and aspects of citizenship are taught through humanities and personal and social education. Students also have access to 'LIVE Ezine' which is an email teaching tool produced by the proprietor.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Staff know students very well and have established strong and trusting relationships. The school uses an informal approach to learning. However, on some occasions teachers do not model best practice. For example, they do not always ensure good quality of writing on the whiteboard or the prompt engagement of support staff to facilitate students' learning. Teachers prepare individual learning plans for every student; these identify students' targets and their learning activities for the term. End of term progress reports effectively evaluate students' learning and behaviour. These are shared with students, parents, staff and the appropriate local authority. These reports also demonstrate the wide range of activities, which meet the needs of individual students well.

Subject leaders level students' work and this assessment informs teachers' planning on a daily basis. Students' work is also assessed through weekly evaluations of lessons taught. This information leads to a more summative assessment using a student tracker system, which records students' levels of attainment every term. This is a relatively crude measure to ascertain progress. It is not yet used consistently by all teachers or in all subjects and it does not yet allow a more detailed tracking of lower attaining students.

Students make good academic progress taking into consideration their very low starting points and substantial barriers for learning. On entry to school students' attainment is below that which is expected nationally. Progress of students' personal and social development is good and often outstanding. Students learn how to study

and, as a consequence, pass nationally accredited examinations. They make particularly good progress in literacy and social skills, which prepares them well for their future lives. For example, at the end of last year, nine out of 10 students successfully entered employment, further education or training.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students are well cared for and this has a very positive impact on students' personal development where they make good progress. Spiritual and cultural elements are taught through humanities and personal and social education. Students learn about current affairs in their key-worker sessions, in humanities and during reflective activities early in the morning. This enables students to understand and learn more about the world they live in and helps them to reflect on their own conduct and behaviour.

Relative to students' challenging and often disturbed backgrounds, behaviour in and around school is good. This aspect is where students make the most rapid progress. Although some behaviour seen in Year 11 was not appropriate, the school dealt with the situation effectively following its own aims and procedures. Key Stage 3 students, who joined school in the autumn term, are now settled and they are beginning to learn more effectively. The school uses detailed behaviour risk assessments and plans which ensure consistency of approach. This is supported by a merit system, which identifies small steps and rewards good behaviour. However, in some lessons seen, boundaries set for students and staff are insufficiently tight to ensure students focus on their learning as quickly as possible. For example, some staff take hot drinks into lessons and students are allowed several privileges, including loud music, which causes unnecessary disruption. Praise for good behaviour is used regularly but it is not always focussed and specific to emphasise to students what is expected.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Provision for student's welfare, health and safety is good. The school's small group and relaxed, family atmosphere aids each student's sense of well-being and enables quick and very positive development in their personal and social skills. Teachers supervise students well and there are appropriate risk assessments in place to ensure safety during off site visits and within the school building. Arrangements for health and safety are reviewed regularly and meet the regulations. However, the school does not meet all requirements for making and maintaining detailed checks on suitability of staff. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place and staff deal firmly with any incidents of misbehaviour. Students report that any incidences of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

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 suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff (including volunteers), carry out appropriate checks to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references. The school must take into account such information when determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(2)(a)).

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

- provide sufficient washrooms for pupils, including facilities for pupils with special needs, 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)).

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.

- Refine the school's procedures to assess and track students' academic progress and involve students more fully in evaluating their own learning.
- Set clear and tight boundaries for students' conduct in lessons to further reduce disruption and maximise learning.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

Name of school	On Track Training Centre (Mildenhall)		
DCSF number	935/6083		
Unique reference number	127003		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2004		
Age range of pupils	11-18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 13	Girls: 1	Total: 14
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 9	Girls: 1	Total: 10
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 5	Girls: 0	Total: 5
Annual fees (day pupils)	£20,160 - £21,600		
Address of school	Unit 2 & 3 Wallis Court James Carter Road Mildenhall Suffolk IP28 7DD		
Telephone number	01638 715555		
Fax number	01638 715555		
Email address	ontrackmildenhall@hotmail.com		
Headteacher	Mrs Ruth Durrant		
Proprietor	Ms Jan Grayson		
Reporting inspector	Karin Heap		
Dates of inspection	5 February 2009		