

New Hall Project 20/20

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number 332/6004
Unique reference number 134458
Inspection number 344421
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Reporting inspector Peter McKenzie

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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, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.¹

Information about the school

New Hall Project 20/20 is registered to provide alternative provision for up to 10 students from Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (Dudley MBC), in the age range 14-16, who are not succeeding in mainstream education and who have been or are in danger of being excluded from school. It works in close partnership with Dudley MBC. 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 eight students attending the school, six girls and two boys. None has a statement of special educational needs. Most students have experienced disrupted education. 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 Project 20/20 provides its students with a good quality of education. They make good progress, often from a low baseline, because of good teaching and good curriculum provision based on performing arts through which they develop high levels of self confidence and team work. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and now meets almost all the regulations. The school's arrangements for safeguarding children fully meet the regulations. New Hall receives outstanding support from a range of officers within Dudley MBC.

Quality of education

New Hall has a clear curriculum policy and termly schemes of work. These focus on a theatrical project leading to a public performance and incorporate a range of skills in creative subjects, drama, dance, design and technology. Key skills and personal, health and social education (PHSE) are provided as a free-standing course and skills and themes are often developed through drama. Work in humanities supports the productions through background studies (topics such as the Second World War and Egyptians). In partnership with a local school, students designed games and presentations and performed drama to illustrate global warming issues to primary pupils.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

The good curriculum is highly appropriate. Students are able to develop skills in context, follow courses leading to appropriate accreditation and develop key skills: for example, in information and communication technology (ICT) by searching for ideas and supporting information, and in presentations. The school uses a wide range of accreditation, mainly the National Open College Network. Those succeeding in all modules at Level 2 are awarded the Diploma for Progression: Community Theatre. Those working towards this qualification achieve entry level and Levels 1 and 2 in various modules. The credits awarded can be carried forward to further study. Key skills are accredited by the City and Guilds of London Institute. Students gain qualifications in first aid and fire prevention. They also receive drugs awareness certificates from The Warehouse, a youth drugs counselling service in Dudley.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Teaching is carefully planned and is based on much group and paired work. As many students stay at the school for any period from one term to two years, teachers cater effectively for many different individual situations. Although teachers' planning recognises the prior attainment and context of students' achievement, it contains too little detail of expected individual outcomes. Teachers support groups and individuals to progress at their own rate but also to contribute to a team effort. The teaching places much responsibility on individual students and develops their self confidence and esteem so that students are fully engaged, enthusiastic and committed to their work. Teachers are all experts in the field of dance and/or drama and enthuse students with their expertise. Resources in ICT are good, each student having access to her/his own laptop.

Parents say that their children have insufficient opportunity to reinforce their learning through homework. Students are expected to undertake research towards their productions and to learn lines every term. If parents request additional work in key skills, the school will provide homework.

A parent said, '[My son] gets help when needed. The teachers go out of their way to assist him.' Students are unanimous in their appreciation of the opportunities New Hall offers them. They particularly like the small learning groups because the teachers have '...more time to spend helping you'.

Students make good progress during their time at the New Hall Project. Their work is well presented and researched. It consists of the entire background to a production and the elements develop together, currently involving the geography and history of Egypt. Students have made significant progress in this area. They also demonstrate improving literacy skills in writing detailed personal descriptions of their own character and in mapping out dialogue. The presentation of their work displays good skills in ICT. They seem to appreciate their own achievement more when it is seen in the context of the production, than in a key skills lesson. Creative skills come to the fore in designing and making props for the play, in the present case Egyptian masks, mummies and sacred animals. In this work, many students demand very high standards of themselves. The set is then designed and built. Photographs of recent sets illustrate ambitious projects. A member of the audience at a recent production commented on the realistic bricks in a wall. All of this work ensures progress by taking students to levels of creativity beyond their previous experience.

Until now, it has been difficult for the school to map progress accurately because of the incomplete information received from schools and the disruption to students' education. Dudley MBC is providing the services of an assessment adviser to work with staff in ensuring secure baseline data on all the students.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. The New Hall Project is very successful in encouraging its students to know themselves and developed their self-confidence. It gives them responsibility, places their work in a team situation where the production will fail if any person plays less than a full part. Students accept this and encourage each other. They begin to understand themselves and their behaviour. They can take responsibility to prevent conflict situations.

The group has its own informal moral code. The students all understand and accept the role they play in the group and their responsibilities to each other. The project leader said that their attendance and punctuality are at a very high level when a production approaches, because they understand that they all have a key part to play. They are very supportive of other members of the group. One student said, 'You can trust everyone. You can leave things lying around.'

Many students have reconsidered their future and how it affects their economic well-being. Understandably, some see their future in performing arts. Students all achieve accredited levels in basic skills. They have a good understanding of public institutions; for example, they had a question and answer session with a local councillor. They receive individual advice from a Connexions adviser. They develop independence because they must travel to school from across the borough and be responsible for their own timekeeping.

Cultural development is supported by the wide range of activity within the curriculum, visits to museums and theatrical performances and students' own work. As part of their production about the Second World War, students developed an understanding of the Jewish faith and culture. They have also produced plays about racism.

Teachers manage behaviour well and students' behaviour is satisfactory overall. New Hall is more tolerant than a larger school may be and students say, 'Teachers don't treat you like little kids', but it has guidelines drawn up by successive groups of students who then accept responsibility for their behaviour. They refer themselves to an adult if they feel that their behaviour is going out of control. They use role-play to depersonalise challenging situations.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Students understand the need for healthy eating and physical exercise. The school has recently begun to serve meals prepared by the neighbouring primary school. This is appreciated by students. Physical education is delivered through dance. Risk

assessments are fully in place for activities outside the school. Students say they all feel safe. They understand why areas of the internet are not available to them. They say staff look after them.

The welfare, health and safety of students are good. Fire safety procedures are fully in place and the recommendations of an external fire risk assessment have been fully implemented. The requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act are fully met.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The regulations for the suitability of the proprietor and staff are fully met.

The school fully implements a policy of safer recruitment and a single central record is fully in place.

School's premises and accommodation

The requirements of the School Premises Regulations 1999 are now met in respect of the provision for students who are ill. Since the last inspection, the school has installed a new window in the main teaching room, allowing improved ventilation. Toilet provision now meets the regulations. The building is a good environment to meet the requirements of the particular activities which form the school's curriculum.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school does not meet the regulations regarding the provision of the name and contact details of the headteacher, the name and contact details of the proprietor, nor the name and contact details of the chair of the steering committee.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school fully meets the regulations in respect of the provision for handling complaints.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.²

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

- provide the school's address and telephone number and the name of the headteacher (paragraph 6(2)(a))
- provide particulars of the proprietor's full name, address for correspondence during both term time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which he may be contacted at all times (paragraph 6(2)(b))
- provide the name and address for correspondence of the Chair of the board of governors (paragraph 6(2)(c)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- improve teachers' lesson planning by providing more detail of the intended outcomes for students
- provide a list to parents/carers of those policies available on request.

² www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm

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	New Hall Project 20/20		
DCSF number	332/6004		
Unique reference number	134458		
Type of school	Secondary special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1 January 2001		
Age range of pupils	14-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 2	Girls: 6	Total: 8
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,400		
Address of school	Huntingtree Park Building Huntingtree Road Halesowen West Midlands B63 4HY		
Telephone number	0121 550 0006		
Fax number	n/a		
Email address	newhall1@btconnect.com		
Project managers	Michele Sidaway, Annette O'Reilly		
Reporting inspector	Peter McKenzie AI		
Dates of inspection	27 - 28 January 2010		