

Wize-Up

Independent special school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	203/6040
Unique Reference Number (URN)	136092
Inspection number	364336
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Angela Corbett HMI

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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, 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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Wize-Up provides full-time and part-time education for up to 34 boys and girls aged between 11 and 16 years of age. The school opened in 2008 as a referral project but now views itself as independent special school. It is located in Eltham, south-east London and admits students who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, some of whom are excluded either permanently or for a fixed term from their mainstream schools. Currently, there are 27 full- and part-time students on roll aged between 12 and 16, none of whom has a statement of special educational needs. For some, their time at the school is very short, while others stay for longer according to their needs. Students are funded either on an individual placement basis or through service-level agreements with local schools and education authorities. The school was first registered in January 2010 and this is its first published inspection report by Ofsted.

The school seeks to 'teach young people how to grow into positive, responsible people, who can work and co-operate with others while developing knowledge and skills, so that they can achieve their potential'. It aims to do this by providing students with both guidance and support, and also a highly tailored curriculum in order to facilitate their return to mainstream school as soon as possible.

Evaluation of the school

Wize-Up provides a good quality of education. It successfully meets its aims of helping young people back into education so that they can achieve their potential. Students speak positively about the school, commenting that they would not be in education if were not for Wize-Up. Longer-term students gain external accreditations and school data suggests that older students are on track to achieve their targets in the newly introduced GCSE courses. Although the school meets all the regulations for the provision of education, most of those in relation to safeguarding and the recruitment of staff are not met. Consequently, despite excellent day-to-day care of students, overall provision for their welfare, health and safety is inadequate.

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

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Quality of education including

The curriculum is satisfactory. It has been carefully designed to change attitudes to learning by enabling them to achieve success both in their academic and personal development, which they have often failed to do in their previous schools. The curriculum, which includes French, is based around National Curriculum subjects and provides sufficient breadth to meet requirements, although some schemes of work are variable in their quality. There are few trips or visiting speakers so that opportunities are missed to widen students' learning experiences and raise their aspirations. Students are now benefiting from specialist staff from outside organisations leading lessons in sports and some elements of personal, social and health education (PSHE). Students' personal and basic skills development is paramount, with additional help and support as needed. Units from the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) effectively underpin many aspects of the curriculum, including PSHE and science at both key stages, with longer-term students all successfully achieving bronze and a few silver awards. At Key Stage 4, the introduction of GCSE courses in English Literature, English Language, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and citizenship is providing more academic rigour. However, this is a recent development and lacks breadth to meet the needs of all students, particularly in science at Key Stage 4. Where appropriate, Key Stage 4 students attend alternative provision or local colleges or undertake regular work experience to broaden their experiences and prepare them for the next steps of their education. Together with good provision for PSHE, which includes sex education and healthy living, this helps to prepare students well for adult life.

Teaching and assessment are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are highly committed to doing the best for their students. Students recognise this and respond well. Their management of any challenging behaviour is excellent so that students' learning is rarely disrupted. However, while there is some variation in the quality of teaching, over time almost all students make good progress in most subjects and close the attainment gap between their current achievement and their capabilities. The most effective lessons are well paced and teachers use a variety of teaching styles and approaches so that the preferred learning styles of all students are met and high expectations are set. For example, in an ICT lesson, students made rapid progress in learning how to create database queries, then participated enthusiastically in a whole-class session on different input devices before returning to the computers to carry out an online task. The pace slows when lessons are based around single activities or similar tasks and students have fewer opportunities to be active and develop independence in their learning. Teachers take care to prepare lessons that meet the differing needs of students; for example, one student's mathematics books showed that he was working at a higher level than his peers. Teachers generally use questioning well to develop students' knowledge and understanding. Teaching assistants support students' good academic learning and personal development effectively, both in lessons and around school. Students are confident users of ICT. However, while some use is made of the interactive

whiteboards and the many computers, opportunities are missed to use ICT as a tool to engage students and promote learning.

The quality of marking is variable, but is satisfactory overall. Students say that they also receive helpful verbal feedback on their work and learning and some outstanding comments explaining how to improve were seen. Students' literacy and numeracy levels and preferred learning styles are assessed on entry. Together with information gained from interviews with students and parents or carers, these are used to form individual learning plans that provide guidance to teachers for students' academic and personal development. Regular academic assessment of students' progress towards challenging academic and individual learning plan targets takes place. This provides closer tracking and monitoring of students' progress, enabling teachers to modify or adapt teaching to support learning. This practice is evolving; for example, the use of grades and levels is a recent introduction, and it is too early to see the full impact of such developments on students' achievement.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The overall provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's 'code of conduct' is central to improving students' social skills and behaviour. The start and end of day sessions provide good opportunities for students to reflect on the day ahead and the previous day's lessons as individuals and also enables them to consider how they can support each other and work as a team. Successes are praised and any difficulties discussed openly, enabling students to build both their self-confidence and self-esteem. This also helps them to learn good social skills so that they get on well together, increasingly take responsibility for their own behaviour, support others and become able to cope in mainstream or college settings. Students' enjoyment of school is evident in their good behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and in their requests to stay at the school or, in some instances, attend for additional days. In general, students attend regularly, although this does vary between students; for some who have had very poor attendance records in other schools, it improves significantly. Careers interviews, work-related learning and progress meetings help students to continue with their education or find employment when they leave. Opportunities for making a positive contribution are limited, although students regularly help out around school, act as 'buddies' to new arrivals, and have collected clothes for Haiti earthquake victims. Knowledge of other cultures and religions, British institutions and public services is satisfactorily developed through ASDAN, the new GCSE citizenship lessons and the weekly sessions led by a staff member from 'Catch 22'. This is a local preventative programme for young people that works with families and individuals as well as in schools. However, opportunities are missed to reflect on wider issues, celebrate cultural and national events, and to undertake visits to or have visitors from local and national institutions or services.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for the students' welfare, health and safety and their safeguarding is inadequate overall. The day-to-day running of the school ensures that all are extremely well supported pastorally and well supervised at all times. Students say that they feel very safe and they are confident that if any bullying occurred it would be dealt with very effectively. Attendance, accidents and any incidents of poor behaviour are recorded diligently together with the actions taken and sanctions imposed. However, the school is in the process of developing its data management system to provide an ongoing log of such incidents.

Good attention is paid to most aspects of health and safety, underpinned by suitable policies and staff training including those for first aid, food hygiene and the use of fire equipment. Fire drills are conducted routinely, with fire risk assessment and testing of fire and electric equipment undertaken annually by outside professionals. However, risk assessments in place do not cover all eventualities, including some of those noted by an external consultant in March 2010. Students are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles through, for example, twice-weekly sports lessons and in the weekly sessions led by 'Catch 22' in which topics such as drug abuse are covered.

The child protection policy meets basic guidelines, but some aspects lack sufficient detail, for example on staff training for child protection and the safe recruitment of staff. Although the school has endeavoured to follow current government safeguarding guidelines, it has not been sufficiently rigorous in checking and recording references, and the relevant checks for some staff in relation to their suitability to work with children were not made prior to the commencement of their employment. Three senior staff have undertaken the required higher level training in child protection and fully understand their responsibilities. However, other staff had not received the required training, although they are now booked to do so.

There is a suitable three-year action plan indicating how the school will fulfil its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school is not sufficiently rigorous in ensuring that its staff are suitable to work with children because the required checks have not been undertaken for all members of domestic staff. Details of current Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for contracted staff are available in the single central register, but other required checks have not been made and are not included, for example checks made on the right to work or details of when the required checks were carried out and by whom.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's spacious and safe accommodation has been systematically improved since the school moved to its current premises in September 2008. The regulations are now met for the provision of facilities for students who are unwell. The three

classrooms, two well-equipped ICT rooms, a reasonably well-resourced library and a large common room provide effective learning environments. The two ICT rooms and one classroom have interactive whiteboards installed; however, there is no science laboratory. The entrance corridors and communal areas have been recently painted and are adequately decorated, but lack variety in display work. There is no recreational outdoor space, although students now use a nearby park on a daily basis at lunchtimes and twice weekly for sports.

Provision of information

The school provides parents and prospective parents with a good range of accurate, helpful and up-to-date information, including its key policies, through its prospectus and parents' induction handbook. Information on the performance of students is included, although this lacks detail. Parents are very well informed of their child's progress in detailed termly reports and face-to-face meetings, as well as through regular telephone contact. There are exceptionally diligent arrangements for informing placing schools and local authorities on students' attendance, behaviour, learning and progress through daily reports. End-of-placement reports also provide a comprehensive overview of students' personal and academic progress, and help to inform decisions for the next step of their education.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a clearly written complaints procedure which meets the requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

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

- ensure that the arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of students at the school have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7)
- ensure that there are effective measures in place to ensure students' health and safety which have regard to the DfES guidance *Health and safety: responsibilities and powers* (DfES 0803/2001) (paragraph 11).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors (standards in part 4) and must:

- verify that no member of staff is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made

Act 2006 (ISA barred list) or carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of any direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction (A List 99 check) (paragraph 19(2)(a))

- for all appointments from 1 September 2003, ensure that appropriate checks have been carried out and completed to confirm each member of staff's medical fitness (paragraph 19(2)(b))
- ensure that for all appointments since 1 September 2003, an enhanced CRB check is made by the proprietor in respect of any member of staff appointed to a position at the school and that the enhanced CRB certificate which is the subject of the application is obtained before or as soon as is practicable after the person's appointment (paragraph 19(2)(c))
- ensure that the checks in 19(2)(b) are carried out before a person's appointment apart from where identified exemptions apply (paragraph 19(3))
- ensure that a person offered for supply by an employment business to the school only begins to work at the school after receiving written notification of the required checks including the date each check was completed or certificate obtained and that a copy of the enhanced CRB certificate was obtained by the employment business before the person was due to begin work (paragraph 20(2)(a))
- ensure that before they start work at the school, the person offered for supply by the employment business is suitable for the work required (paragraph 20(2)(b))
- ensure that the identity of any staff not directly employed by the school is checked before they begin work at the school irrespective of any check made by the employment business (paragraph 20(2)(c))
- ensure that any contractual arrangements with an employment business include the requirements set out in paragraphs 20(2)(a), including a requirement to supply a copy of a CRB certificate that contains any disclosures (paragraph 20(2)(d))
- ensure that for each member of staff appointed on or after 1 May 2007, the register shows all the appropriate checks, including the date on which each check was completed or the certificate obtained (paragraph 22(3))
- ensure that for staff not directly employed by the school, the register shows that written notification has been received from the employment business that it has carried out the checks referred to in 20(2)(a) together with the date the written notification that each check was made, or certificate obtained, was received (paragraph 22(5)).

Inspection judgements

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

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special school		
Date school opened	2010		
Age range of pupils	11–16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 11	Girls: 7	Total: 18
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 3	Total: 9
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,675		
Address of school	579 Westhorne Avenue, Eltham, London SE9 6DN		
Telephone number	020 8859 9664		
Email address	info@wize-up.org.uk		
Headteacher	Lorretta Boyd		
Proprietor	Lorretta Boyd		