

New Directions College

Independent school standard inspection report

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| Reporting inspector | Mohammad Ismail |

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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

New Directions College is an independent special school. The school occupies a two-storey building near the centre of Huddersfield. It is registered for up to 50 boys and girls aged 14 to 16 years with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school currently caters for 35 students, eight of whom have a statement of special educational needs and four are in the care of the local authority. Almost all of the students are referred by Kirklees local authority. The school was opened in November 2008 and it was last inspected in June 2009. The school's aims are to 'reach and engage young people with a new approach to learning; inspire young people through a range of stimulating learning experiences; equip young people with appropriate qualifications; prepare young people for transition to college or working life.'

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education and is well on its way to meeting its stated aims. The curriculum and teaching are satisfactory and, as a result, most students make satisfactory progress. The school meets all the requirements for safeguarding students and makes satisfactory provision for their welfare, health and safety. Students' behaviour and arrangements for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. The school meets all but one of the regulations for independent schools and it has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection by improving the quality of education.

Quality of education

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum to meet the needs of its students, and covers the required areas of learning. It places a focus on social rehabilitation and return to mainstream education. For this purpose, the school works very closely with the local authority. There are appropriate schemes of work for the subjects taught, leading to GCSE and Assessment and Qualifications Alliance qualifications. In addition, there are suitable opportunities for training in construction, woodwork, car mechanics and music. Effective science provision is offered through a shared arrangement with a nearby referral unit. The school focuses strongly on improving

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

students' basic skills in literacy and numeracy and helping them to progress into work or training. There is good provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) which includes sex education, healthy life styles, cultural and multicultural education, finance management, careers advice and skills for life. This programme is effective in contributing to students' social rehabilitation. Although planning and provision for students' human and social education is generally satisfactory, it is an area which would benefit from further development. This aspect is dependent on coverage from within the PSHE programme, citizenship education and English and an overview of the provision is needed to demonstrate progression more effectively. The school, in cooperation with the local authority, offers effective counselling for students who are in need of help with their personal problems. The school addresses appropriately the needs of students who have statements of special educational needs. The statements are used to prepare suitable individual education plans for these students. There are no discrete lessons for information and communication technology (ICT). However, students have the opportunity to use computers to develop various skills in their PSHE lessons. The provision for physical education is good. Students have the opportunity to do jujitsu in various sessions and at break times.

The school makes good provision for work experience placements for its students with a variety of local businesses and organisations. For example, for the last two years students have been placed in an Early Years Foundation Stage facility, a local motor vehicle repair company and a catering service. Almost all students have attended for training in construction work, catering, hairdressing and other courses in Kirklees College and Dewsbury College.

Students are encouraged to socialise with others and join community clubs. For example, every Friday students have the opportunity to play football with students from other referral units. In addition, extra optional jujitsu sessions are offered in the evening. There is an external educational visits programme which includes, for example, a recent visit to the National Armouries Museum in Leeds. Students occasionally go off the site for activities such as climbing and walking. The school, with the help of a local poultry farm, keeps some hens and students look after them. The school has good working relationships with the police, fire service and the local youth offenders' rehabilitation programme. This variety of opportunities contributes effectively to the preparation of students for the experiences of adult life.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Most students make satisfactory progress and some who have attended for longer have made good progress. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to meet the students' behavioural and social needs. Teachers use suitable methods to ensure that students remain engaged in their work. On occasion, this becomes difficult. However, after intervention from support workers, students re-engage in their lessons. Teachers use appropriate hand-outs and worksheets. Occasionally, they use educational games and other activities to make lessons more enjoyable and to engage students' interest for a longer period. For example, in a mathematics lesson a teacher successfully retained students' interest by involving them in a suitable educational game. There are mid-

term and short-term plans in place for all subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers take students' prior attainment into consideration in their lesson planning. They ask challenging questions and give students the right level of work which matches their abilities. Occasionally, they provide opportunities for students to work independently and to work in groups with the involvement of teaching assistants who provide good support for learning. Education and support staff enjoy good working relationships. Relationships between teachers and students are good most of the time and most students show high levels of respect towards the staff. Most of them engage well in lessons, show interest and ask questions. Occasionally, their behaviour in classrooms becomes challenging. However, teachers are caring and manage behavioural difficulties satisfactorily.

There are sufficient resources to support teaching and learning apart from limited numbers of computers. There are not enough computers for students in all classrooms. This issue was raised by the students in their meeting with the inspector.

The school's marking and assessment policy is effectively implemented. The school uses an assessment system to conduct termly reviews of individual education plans and suitable targets are set for each area of learning. The school reports every term to parents, carers and the local authority. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There is a progress tracking system in place, which records students' progress every half term. Students' work is marked regularly with comments about how to improve their work. Assessment records show that students make satisfactory progress over time, including the achievement of external accreditation. At present, the school does not have a policy for providing homework. Parents and carers would like homework to be given regularly to extend students' learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development and their behaviour are satisfactory and improving. Most parents and carers agree that the school makes a positive impact on students' behaviour. The school, through its PSHE programme, helps students to improve their attitude towards education and social life. While the attendance of some students is low, it is improving over time and is much improved compared with their attendance at previous schools. There is a behaviour policy which is successfully implemented through suitable rewards and sanctions. Most students behave appropriately in their classrooms and around the school. However, occasionally their behaviour becomes challenging. The skills for life programme helps students to gain self-confidence and to develop a good understanding of what they need to do to be prepared for their future lives. The school is a multicultural community and students learn about different cultures in their PSHE programme. They have opportunities to mix with a variety of people in the school's open days. All this helps students to respect people of different cultures. However, although students' cultural development is satisfactory, visits to places of cultural interest have not been undertaken.

Students learn about British institutions and the political system in their English and PSHE lessons. They have opportunities to meet those who work in the local community such as the police, fire service and others. They are taught to respect the law, to be good citizens and to contribute to the community. They take part in fund-raising for local charities. Students in their woodwork classes build chicken runs, bird tables, bird boxes and flower troughs and donate them to local schools and old people's homes.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for safeguarding and students' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. All the required policies and procedures are in place, including a safeguarding and safer recruitment policy, and all staff including the designated officer are trained at the required level. The training for the designated officer was found to require updating, and an appropriate course was booked for the near future during the inspection. The anti-bullying policy, health and safety and risk assessment policies for school and out-of-school activities, together with the first aid policy, are all effectively implemented. First aid officers are trained at the required level. Fire-fighting equipment is regularly tested and regular fire drills are conducted.

The students are encouraged to exercise regularly and take part in clubs and hobbies. They are regularly made aware of the damaging consequences of smoking and drug abuse, through the local drugs, alcohol, and sexual health team who make regular visits during the year to talk to students. They have access to substance misuse counselling and anger management sessions with the local authority's professional staff. The school has prepared a three-year plan to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The school maintains attendance and admission registers which meet the regulations.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has undertaken all the required checks to ensure that its staff and the proprietor are suitable to work with children. The school maintains a single central register of checks on the suitability of staff which meets the regulations.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is based in a single large building which is a safe and effective place for learning. There are specialist classrooms for different subjects along with an ICT room, an assembly hall and a secure playground. A local sports facility is well used for physical education activities. The school is adequately furnished and decorated, with students' work appropriately displayed on walls. There are sufficient toilets with washing facilities for students and staff. There is a medical room, with the required facilities to hand.

Provision of information

The school meets all requirements by providing the necessary information to parents, carers and others through an up-to-date prospectus. The school has an effective policy of reporting to parents, carers and others termly, including at the end of each year.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a complaints policy and set of procedures which meet all of the regulations. The school has taken steps to ensure that parents and carers are aware of these procedures.

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 the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- ensure that classroom resources for ICT are of an adequate quality, quantity and range and that they are used effectively (paragraph 3(f)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- further develop the planning for human and social education
- provide homework regularly to extend students’ learning
- organise visits to different places of cultural interest, in order to extend students’ appreciation of the variety of cultures in the local and national communities
- update staff training regularly.

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

Inspection judgements

| | | | |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| outstanding | good | satisfactory | inadequate |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|

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 | | | ✓ | |
|--|--|--|---|--|

School details

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| School status | Independent | | |
| Type of school | Special school for students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties | | |
| Date school opened | November 2008 | | |
| Age range of pupils | 14-16 years | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | | |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils) | Boys: 30 | Girls: 5 | Total: 35 |
| Number on roll (part-time pupils) | Boys: 0 | Girls: 0 | Total: 0 |
| Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs | Boys: 7 | Girls: 1 | Total: 8 |
| Number of pupils who are looked after | Boys: 3 | Girls: 1 | Total: 4 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £8,550 | | |
| Address of school | Aspley Business Park Lincoln Street Huddersfield HD1 6RX | | |
| Telephone number | 01484 422554 | | |
| Email address | newdirections@gmx.com | | |
| Headteacher | Mr Michael Lyn | | |
| Proprietor | Michael Lyn, Peter Rowe, Andrew Williams & Michael Reynolds | | |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 May 2012

Dear students

Inspection of New Directions College, Huddersfield, HD16 RX

Thank you very much for welcoming me when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you, observing your lessons and other activities. I am pleased to tell you that your school has made some progress since its last inspection by improving the quality of education. The school is judged to provide you with a satisfactory quality of education. You have informed me that you enjoy your education and that your attendance is improving. You have asked for more computers and homework. I have asked the school to do the following to meet your needs and improve the provision:

- plan better for human and social education
- provide more computers to enhance teaching and learning
- provide homework to extend classroom learning
- organise visits to different places of cultural interest to give you the opportunities to meet and understand people of different cultures
- update staff training regularly.

I enjoyed meeting you and wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mohammad Ismail
Lead Inspector