

# My Choice School - Kingfisher View

My Choice Ltd, Unit 3a Mill Green Industrial Estate, Mill Green Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 1XQ

**Inspection dates** 4–5 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	Adequate	3
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Adequate	3
Quality of teaching	Adequate	3
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

## Summary of key findings

### This school is adequate because

- Leaders and managers have not ensured that the work provided always builds in small, achievable steps on students' previous learning. As a result teaching and achievement are not consistently good, particularly for students new to the school.
- Students' work is assessed regularly, but teachers do not regularly compare the extent of students' progress with other students working from similar starting points nationally.
- The attendance and participation of some students are too variable for them to gain the maximum benefit from their education.
- Students take part in activities in the local community but do not have sufficient opportunities to meet and understand others from a variety of cultures and beliefs in the wider community.
- The location and small size of the school room are adequate but do not provide the best quality learning environment for students with challenging behaviour.
- Recent changes in the student population have resulted in new challenges to the authority and experience of the staff.

### The school has the following strengths

- The quality of teaching is good for the small number of students who attend regularly and persevere with their learning. These students make good progress.
- The curriculum combines a suitable range of experiences on and off site, which are planned well to meet the individual needs of students.
- The school's leaders and managers understand the recent changes which have challenged the stability of the school and have the capacity to respond effectively.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place with one day's notice.
- Three lessons were observed, taught by one teacher. One part lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector viewed a range of school documents, including policies, school administrative records, teachers' planning, samples of students' work and students' progress files.
- Discussions took place with members of the teaching and care staff, and with students.
- There were no responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Account was taken of five responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

David Young, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- My Choice School – Kingfisher View is a small school which opened in 2008. Students attending the school live in residential accommodation provided by the company which owns the school.
- The school is co-educational and is registered to admit students aged between 11 and 16 years. The current students are from varied ethnic heritages and are aged between 12 and 15 years.
- The school provides for students who are unable to sustain placements in other schools, including special schools, and who have a history of exclusions or non-attendance. They may have learning and motivational difficulties and each of the current students has a statement of special educational needs.
- The main emphasis of education at the school is, 'to motivate and engage students in the learning process to enable them to acquire the skills necessary to live and work independently and constructively in the wider community'.
- The school makes use of additional off-site provision to provide part-time vocational courses for some students in Key Stage 4.
- The school was last inspected in March 2010.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The school's leaders and managers should improve the consistency in students' achievement by:
  - making sure that new learning always builds effectively, in small steps, on students' previous achievements, particularly of those students new to the school
  - helping new students to settle more quickly into the routines of the school and so engage more quickly with their learning
  - implementing strategies for assessment which provide evidence of the extent of students' progress over time compared with similar students nationally
  - monitoring students' attendance and involvement in lessons and making any required adjustments to ensure that they are all continuously engaged in meaningful learning
  - making arrangements to increase the size and location of the school classroom
  - quickly implementing plans for improvement to address the new challenges the school faces.
- Increase the range of opportunities for students to develop an understanding of, and respect for, those from different cultural backgrounds.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

### Adequate

Students make adequate progress with their learning due to overall adequate teaching. The extent of progress made is very variable and is dependent on the extent to which individual students attend and take an active part in lessons. Students who attend regularly and join in the learning provided achieve well. Students who have been placed at the school for longer periods of time also make good progress from mostly low starting points. These students have achieved certificates in a number of nationally accredited unit awards and entry level certificates.

When students are placed part-time on well-chosen courses with other providers, they demonstrate success in the development of their basic skills and vocational learning. Individual students have also made good progress in developing their skills in areas of personal interest such as music, sport, and working with animals. There is a suitable emphasis in the curriculum on the development of students' skills in literacy and numeracy and they develop these successfully in real-life situations such as budgeting and purchasing ingredients for meals. A minority of students, who are new to the school, do not take advantage of the opportunities provided by the school and do not make consistent and sustained progress in line with their abilities.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

### Adequate

Students' personal development and behaviour are adequate overall. Students enter the school with a range of negative previous experiences of school and of relationships. Those who are placed at the school for significant periods of time are helped to understand their emotional barriers to good behaviour and to develop strategies to improve their cooperation and sense of responsibility. Behaviour and attitudes to adults and to each other are not consistently good and, for some students who are new to the school, this results in an unwillingness to attend regularly and take a sufficiently active part in the life of the school. This has a negative impact on their learning.

The school's programme for personal, social and health education is taught effectively through a number of subjects on the timetable. Students are helped to understand themselves and how they may play an active part in the local community. Individual students belong to clubs and organisations beyond the school. For example, they take part in music and drama, provide dog-walking for members of the community and help out at a local stable. The school's strategies to involve all students in this level of commitment are not always successful and individuals occasionally place themselves at risk through a lack of cooperation and sense of responsibility.

The curriculum and ethos of the school place an appropriate emphasis on the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All students are taught to be reflective and to consider the consequences of their responses and actions. In some lessons there are opportunities for students to develop awareness of different beliefs and cultures but they have insufficient first-hand experience of a variety of different communities nationally and globally. The school provides a cohesive social community, strongly supported by the staff in students' residences, and students mostly appreciate the personal relationships which they develop. Leaders ensure that when controversial and political issues are considered that steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views.

### Quality of teaching

### Adequate

The quality of teaching overall is adequate because it results in adequate overall achievement. Inconsistent attendance and involvement in lessons by a minority of students new to the school mean that not all achieve the standards of which they are capable. This is despite the fact that in individual lessons, the quality of teaching is good. The good teaching of those new to the school

has not yet had time to have good effect. The small number of students who have attended the school for some time take their learning seriously and maintain good attendance and benefit from the generally good lessons. Lessons are based on comprehensive schemes of work which ensure that all students have access to the full range of areas of learning.

Teachers' planning takes good account of the requirements of students' statements of special educational needs. The assessment of students on entry to the school is improving and the new methods of assessment used help to ensure that teachers have a good awareness of the starting points for learning for each individual student. The work provided in lessons makes good use of appropriate resources, including information and communication technology, and every effort is made to ensure that students' interests are catered for in addition to the development of their essential basic skills. Individual lessons are appropriately adapted to take account of gaps and difficulties in students' learning, as these emerge. There is a good focus on the development of basic skills of future value in the workplace and in further education. When in attendance, the new students are encouraged to think and to participate. There are good relationships between staff and students, and staff are sensitive to individual circumstances, patient and encouraging.

Students' ongoing learning is assessed regularly and staff have a sound overview of what has been learned. However, assessment is not securely referenced to what students are expected to achieve for their age. In consequence, while the progress of the longer-term students remains good and the shorter-term students remains adequate, teachers do not have precise information to challenge students sufficiently. In consequence, both groups do not progress quite as fast as they might. Students value the reward system and mostly strive to achieve maximum points at the end of each day. The care workers, who work alongside the teaching staff to support students' learning, make an effective contribution to helping students to improve their attitudes to learning over time.

### Quality of curriculum

**Good**

The school's curriculum is good. Students are provided with an appropriate breadth and range of experience. All the required areas of learning are provided in both Key Stages 3 and 4, and the subjects taught meet the requirements of students' statements of special educational needs. Each student has an individual education plan which is kept under regular review and adapted suitably in recognition of progress made against well-defined targets for learning.

The schemes of work, while providing a wide range of learning experiences, are not securely related to national levels of attainment in a manner which would enable teaching staff to recognise whether students are making sufficient progress over time from their various starting points. As with the assessment system, this means that the curriculum, though good, is not challenging enough to be outstanding.

The school makes good use of external accreditation, particularly the national unit award scheme and entry level certificates which provide students with motivating feedback on their achievements. The school has a good relationship with a local college of further education and students have completed successful part-time placements as part of their curriculum experience in Key Stage 4. Students also have the opportunity to take part in successful work experience related to areas of personal interest. Suitable careers guidance and transition planning are provided in conjunction with local service providers. The curriculum is enriched by the wide range of extra-curricular activities, including visits to places of historic and civic importance, together with a range of sporting venues targeted to meet students' individual preferences. The curriculum has no political bias.

### Pupils' welfare, health and safety

**Adequate**

Arrangements for students' welfare, health and safety are adequate and all the regulatory

requirements are met. There are comprehensive policies in place. These ensure that all staff work consistently to safeguard students, to prevent bullying, and to develop an effective sense of community within the school. However, the implementation of policy is not always effective in ensuring that all students cooperate well. As a result, a few students occasionally fail to comply with the school's expectations in relation to responsible behaviour and attendance at lessons.

Leaders and managers pay good attention to staff training, to risk assessment and to routine safety checks. A suitable fire risk assessment has been drawn up and is reviewed regularly; appropriate remedial action is taken in response to any identified shortfalls. There are effective procedures for attending to the review of educational and care provision. Admission and attendance registers are completed and up to date. The school's leaders are diligent in carrying out all the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. Details of all the required checks are included in an up-to-date single central register. Senior staff have been trained in safer recruitment and to the required levels in safeguarding and first aid.

### Leadership and management

### Adequate

The quality of leadership and management is adequate. It is adequate rather than good mainly because leaders have not found ways to address the issues of a minority of difficult behaviour and persistent absence from lessons. As a result, teaching and achievement are adequate overall.

There are comprehensive policies and procedures to cover all regulatory requirements and these are mostly implemented effectively. Good attention has been paid over a number of years to the development of a suitable curriculum which serves the needs of a varied student intake. Longer-term students who engage in the education provided achieve appropriate outcomes and are supported effectively to achieve well. Newer students do not settle quickly enough into the routines of the school or immediately engage in their learning. The staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed very positive support for the provision made by the school and its impact on students in attendance.

The school has experienced a recent challenge as a result of changes in the student population, coinciding with a period of recent staff turnover. In consequence, the school has not been able to maintain the higher standards evident at the time of the last inspection and so ensure effective participation by all students. The school's leaders and managers are aware that the current provision is not meeting the needs of all students as well as it should and has a good development plan to address the issues. The future success of the school is dependent upon the extent to which leaders and managers take decisive action immediately and implement the plans for improvement.

The school provides the required information for parents, carers and local authorities. Regular information is made available about students' progress and personal development. There are suitable procedures for managing complaints and the procedures meet requirements. The school room, although adequate, does not provide the best environment for the regular education of a group of students with challenging behaviour. There is alternative accommodation available on the school site and plans are in hand to bring this into use as the school's main classroom.

The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school regulations are met.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135782
<b>Inspection number</b>	420239
<b>DfE registration number</b>	938/6276

This inspection was carried out 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special day school
<b>School status</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	My Choice Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Alex Hyland
<b>Headteacher</b>	Annie Murphy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 March 2010

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