

New Directions College

Aspley Business Park, Lincoln Street, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD1 6RX

Inspection dates	22–24 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Systems to check the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on pupils' progress for the two days a week pupils attend creative and sporting sessions in school or the local sports centre are not as robust as those for the three days of formal teaching in school. Consequently, leaders and teachers cannot tell if pupils are achieving as well as they can in these sessions.
- School improvement planning does not identify precisely enough the actions needed to improve identified weaker areas, or how leaders will check the difference actions will make to the behaviour, attendance and achievement of pupils.
- Staff do not have enough training opportunities to continue to develop their subject skills or share, or learn from, good practice outside the school.
- Staff monitor pupils' behaviour and attitudes carefully. Any significant incidents of misbehaviour are recorded in pupils' personal files. These incidents are not always transferred to the school's bullying and behaviour log. This means that leaders and directors cannot check the impact of work on reducing incidents of poor behaviour accurately enough.
- Directors do not hold the headteacher to account for the impact of the school's work robustly enough. Directors meet regularly with the headteacher and have detailed discussions on the work of the school, including how well pupils are achieving, but there are no formal reports about these discussions.
- Not all pupils come to school on time. Too many start their holidays the day before the end of term.
- Although pupils read regularly in their lessons, the range of books available to read is limited.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and directors have established a caring, trusting atmosphere. Pupils with previous negative views of school are supported well to settle in and make good progress in class.
- All pupils are from disadvantaged communities and achieve well from their starting points. They leave Year 11 having gained qualifications in at least basic English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils are taught well about how to live their lives successfully in modern Britain and about risks to their safety in their own community and beyond.
- Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is nurtured effectively. Pupils report that they feel safe and particularly value the care and support from staff. Pupils say their attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning improve because of this support and the help they get to manage their own behaviour more successfully.
- Directors have ensured that the independent school standards have been met. Recent improvement to the school's website has made sure that the most up-to-date policies are available to parents.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership, management and governance of the school by making sure that:
 - improvement plans identify clearly the priorities that are in need of improvement, setting targets to measure the impact of actions on pupils' achievements, behaviour and progress
 - directors receive regular, formal reports about the work and impact of the school so that they can hold the headteacher to account more robustly
 - staff transfer any incidents of serious misbehaviour from pupils' individual files into the school's overarching behaviour and bullying log so that the impact of their work on reducing such incidents can be checked
 - provide more opportunities for staff to continue to develop their subject skills and learn from good practice beyond the school.

- Improve the impact of the Monday and Friday curriculum by ensuring that:
 - teachers' planning and delivery of learning builds on pupils' current skills, knowledge and understanding so that they are stretched to make equally good progress from their starting points in these sessions as they do in the Tuesday to Thursday curriculum.

- Broaden the range of books that pupils can read for pleasure and information.

- Improve pupils' punctuality and attendance rates by working with parents and pupils to ensure that they understand that pupils need to attend school on time and right up to the end of term.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

- Directors set up the school to give every pupil a chance to overcome their barriers to learning and succeed, following difficult experiences in their mainstream school (pupils are also on the roll of a mainstream school but attend most or all of their education at New Directions). Directors meet regularly with the headteacher and, through discussion and review of information, know the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, there is little formal reporting or recording of the outcomes of discussions. Consequently, directors cannot check the impact of actions determined robustly enough.
- Meetings include discussion about individual pupils' behaviour, attendance and progress in English; mathematics; science; personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education; and music. Directors do not receive such information about the curriculum that pupils follow on Mondays and Fridays. This is because teachers do not track pupils' work as closely in these sessions. Teachers do not know, and directors cannot check, if pupils achieve as well on these days as they do the rest of the week.
- Leaders have tackled weaknesses identified at the last inspection effectively. For example, reward-based homework is a regular activity for pupils. The curriculum has been broadened effectively. Work to improve pupils' understanding of their local community, and cultures and faiths different from their own, is threaded well through the PSHE curriculum. Experiences are suitably enriched by visitors to school, such as residents from Highfields who work with pupils in the school's music studio, and visits out of school, including to a local mosque and Sikh temple.
- Leadership of teaching, learning and assessment has been strengthened since the last inspection. The headteacher has introduced a detailed assessment system to check pupils' work regularly. He visits lessons and provides feedback to staff on strengths and things staff can improve. Sometimes, training opportunities for staff are identified but these are not always then followed up.
- Staff say they are held to account more effectively for pupils' achievements. This includes improvements to the way they have to check pupils' progress in lessons and the regular meetings they have about their pupils with the headteacher. Pupils' good achievements and behaviour are celebrated at these meetings. Those whose behaviour or attitudes are causing concern or whose work is slipping are identified, and action is quickly taken to tackle concerns.
- The school has a successful focus on pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught well about how to live successfully as citizens in modern Britain. The broad PSHE curriculum and opportunities to discuss issues with staff mean that pupils gain a good understanding of democracy, tolerance, respect and valuing the differences of others. Local issues, such as knife crime, are explored to help pupils keep safe and understand the workings of the criminal justice system.
- Pupils' behaviour, their attitudes to learning and being cooperative members of a school community improve well during their time here. Their attendance also improves. Attendance rates are currently around 80%. Although this is well below average, it represents a significant improvement on pupils' previous attendance in mainstream schools. However, some pupils regularly turn up to school late. Too many pupils start their holiday early and do not attend on the last day of term.
- Significant work is undertaken to ensure that pupils gain independent advice and guidance on their next steps after school. The careers officer from Kirklees Council provides good advice and support. Visitors from the army, police and human resource companies broaden pupils' horizons of what kind of careers they can pursue. As a result, virtually all move on to their chosen college, training or employment choices when they leave at the end of Year 11.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors (directors and proprietors) have set a strong, inclusive vision for the school and take an active part in it. All pupils are treated equally and actions taken to ensure that discrimination of any kind is tackled. Governors have ensured that performance management arrangements for staff are in place and suitable, and that the independent school standards are met. However, they have not been as robust in demanding formal reports from the headteacher about the impact of the school's work.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's safeguarding policy reflects current

requirements and is available on the school's website. All staff have undertaken appropriate training at the right level of responsibility. This includes training on how to understand and respond to risks from radicalisation or extremism and female genital mutilation. All staff have also been trained in first aid. A range of work is undertaken to help pupils understand risks to their safety, such as from social media and the internet, drugs, alcohol, sexual exploitation and going missing from school or home. Risk assessments are in place for the school and for activities outside school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Effective teaching from Tuesday to Thursday enables pupils to make good progress in their learning during this part of the week. However, evidence from discussions and pupils' work in the creative, academic and sporting activities that pupils attend on Mondays and Fridays shows that progress is not always as strong. During these sessions, too many pupils work at the same level, despite their different abilities and this slows their progress down overall.
- Staff build strong and successful relationships with pupils. They use effective strategies to manage pupils' behaviour when pupils are having a difficult time. Patient and calm guidance enables pupils to reflect on their behaviour. Pupils usually respond quickly and get back to their work without much delay. They particularly like the small classes, which help them to concentrate on their learning.
- Assessments undertaken when pupils start at New Directions are thorough and include checks on pupils' emotional and behavioural skills, as well as their academic achievements. Teachers make good use of this initial information to plan learning from Tuesday to Thursday. They have developed detailed schemes of work that are matched carefully to the range of qualifications that pupils study so they can gain accreditations in the subjects they take.
- Pupils have many opportunities to solve problems and grapple with mathematical concepts that they missed in previous schools. The systematic way that skills are taught ensures that any gaps are clearly identified. Additional work is provided to help pupils practise skills until they achieve them. This is also the case in English, music and in the broad PSHE curriculum pupils study.
- In line with the school's marking and assessment policy, leaders, teachers and support staff provide individual spoken feedback to pupils on their work throughout lessons. The majority also use careful questioning and written feedback that helps pupils to understand how well they are doing and what they need to improve. In one English lesson, the teacher's skilled questioning drew out pupils' understanding of the limitations of their current writing and then how to develop and extend it further. This is in line with the challenging objectives of the day.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to read in lessons across the curriculum and reading skills are developing effectively. While there are many opportunities to read texts and information, the range of books that pupils can access for pleasure is limited. Opportunities to write at length other than in English lessons are also limited. Leaders know this and are taking action to improve this aspect of the school's work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. This is a strong aspect of the school's work. However, the tardiness of some pupils' arrival to school and the significant minority of pupils who start their holiday before the last day of term mean that, although improving, pupils' attendance and attitudes to school are not consistently good.
- Pupils report they are happy and feel safe. They say they value how the school is helping them to achieve well and to be prepared well for the time they leave. Pupils report confidently that they can turn to any adult in times of need and do so willingly. They are effectively helped to understand risks to their safety in the local community and report that they are well versed in local risks, such as gun crime, risks to their sexual health, sexual exploitation and the internet.
- Pupils say they have recently been taught about risks from extremism or radicalisation. This work has not been included in the school's written PSHE policy. The subject specialist for PSHE is currently adapting the policy to recognise the work carried out, and to reflect the school's safeguarding policy and staff training on their duty to prevent harm from such risks.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Staff and pupils report convincingly that pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning improve significantly during their time at New Directions. Teachers carefully record any incidents of serious misbehaviour in each pupil's 'Single point folder', and actions taken. However, teachers do not always transfer incidents into the school's overarching behaviour log. As a result, incidents are not always formally reported. Directors cannot therefore track the number of incidents accurately, or know the impact of the school's work on reducing incidents of poor behaviour precisely enough.
- Staff seek to develop successful relationships with pupils as soon as they start school. This helps pupils to understand the school's rules, and helps them to settle down quickly and usually take an active part in their learning. Consistent behaviour management strategies used by staff and calm, patient support helps pupils to manage their complex behaviours effectively. Occasionally, pupils leave the classroom but on these occasions support workers are at hand to support them and get them back to learning briskly.
- Behaviour around school, in lessons and at lunchtimes is generally cordial. Pupils settle into their learning and concentrate on the work in hand. They were seen socialising with staff and each other successfully as they shared the healthy and highly valued lunchtime meals.
- Fixed-period exclusions are rare. Pupils report that the restorative justice approach that the school takes helps them understand the impact of their behaviour on others, and also helps them to modify their behaviour in class and in developing relationships with others.
- Pupils feel that there are few bullying issues in the school because of the small 'family feel' in school and the way the staff respond to untoward incidents. Pupils are taught to value differences in others. They have a good understanding of prejudice-based bullying including homophobic, gender or racist bullying. On the rare occasions that such bullying takes place, pupils state that it is stamped on quickly.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The progress pupils make in their Tuesday to Thursday curriculum is clear as pupils' achievements are tracked carefully. Virtually all pupils achieve formal accreditations and qualifications in English, mathematics and science before they leave in Year 11.
- The impact of teaching and the curriculum on pupils' outcomes on Monday and Friday is not as clear. This is because teachers do not track pupils' progress as rigorously and work is often the same for everyone, meaning it is hard for some and too easy for others. This variation in the week means that outcomes are not consistently good.
- Pupils join the school with knowledge, skills and understanding in English, mathematics and science that are usually well below average. Many have been out of education for a significant time before they arrive, so the information the school receives about their achievements on entry is often inaccurate.
- A good emphasis is placed on pupils' English, mathematical and scientific development. Regular lessons improve pupils' basic skills and fill gaps in their knowledge. Schemes of work and lesson plans are adapted well to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils frequently work with staff on a one-to-one basis. Pupils say they appreciate this level of support and it helps them to focus on their learning.
- Most pupils make good progress in the courses they study and virtually all leave with at least functional skills in English, mathematics and science. One pupil praised the way that mathematics is taught and how it is improving her skills: 'It's so structured and it always shows you what you are struggling with, so you always know where you are going wrong and what you have to do to put it right.'
- All pupils are from disadvantaged communities and none has an identified special educational need or an education, health and care plan. Although the school does not receive additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils, the individual approach to meeting each pupil's needs from Tuesday to Thursday means that pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- The most-able pupils are targeted to achieve well in the higher-level GCSE examination subjects they study. Although a small proportion take these qualifications, the proportion is growing as the school has broadened the range of courses that pupils can take.

School details

Unique reference number	135750
Inspection number	10006129
DfE registration number	382/6002

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit for pupils with social, emotional or mental health difficulties
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Number of part time pupils	3
Proprietor	Michael Reynolds, Peter Rowe
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	Michael Lyn
Annual fees (day pupils)	£10,500
Telephone number	01484 422554
Website	http://newdirectionscollege.com
Email address	newdirections@gmx.com
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2012

Information about this school

- New Directions College is an independent pupil referral unit. It is registered for up to 50 boys and girls aged 14 to 16 with social, emotional or mental health difficulties and associated behavioural difficulties. Almost all the pupils referred to the school are from Kirklees local authority. There are currently pupils attending the school from Wakefield and Sheffield.
- There are currently 27 pupils on the school roll. All of these are dually registered with the mainstream secondary school they last attended. Twenty-four pupils attend full time and three for part of the week. These pupils attend college or training courses for the time they are not at New Directions. These placements are determined by the mainstream school and not New Directions.
- All the pupils come from disadvantaged communities. The school does not receive any of the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils. This funding stays with the mainstream school.
- Around 35% of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. None of the pupils in school currently has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school was opened in November 2008 and it was last inspected in 2012, when it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The school has accepted a pupil below the age limit approved by the Department for Education. Leaders are currently in discussions with the department to seek an exceptional placement as this is a temporary arrangement. Currently, there is no other suitable provision for the pupil to attend.
- 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'.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place with one day's notice and lasted for two and a half days.
- The inspector visited eight lessons. While in lessons, she observed learning, looked at pupils' work and work folders, talked to pupils and reviewed the teachers' assessment information about pupils' current achievements.
- The inspector spoke informally to pupils at social times during the day and formally to a group of pupils on day two.
- Interviews were held with the headteacher, staff and the directors of the school.
- A range of documentation was reviewed, including information about pupils' attendance and progress, schemes of work for subjects, policies and procedures related to the safeguarding of pupils, and documents required as part of the independent school standards.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to generate a report that could be viewed by the inspector.

Inspection team

Margaret Farrow, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

