

# Get U Started Training

1 Haldane Street, Ashington, Northumberland NE63 8SF

## Inspection dates

1–3 May 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The school has sustained good outcomes for pupils since it was last inspected. It complies fully with the independent school standards.
- Good teaching and the consistent application of strategies to improve behaviour help pupils to find their feet and re-engage with learning.
- Parents who spoke to the inspector praised the work of the school. They appreciate the time taken each week to keep them well informed of the progress that their children are making.
- Pupils' special educational needs are met effectively. Pupils benefit from learning in small groups and receive a high level of individual attention.
- Teachers plan and prepare lessons that capture the interests of most pupils. Younger pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics progress well.
- Older pupils also make good progress. Most pupils in recent years have achieved accredited qualifications in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. Many also attain qualifications in vocational subjects.
- The curriculum is broad and takes account of pupils' interests. There is a good range of visits out of school to places that pupils are unlikely to experience when not in school.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in the school. They describe teachers and other adults as kind and friendly with a good sense of humour.
- Leaders, including the trustees, show a strong commitment to improving the life chances of pupils who have been unable to cope in mainstream education. However, leaders' plans to improve pupil outcomes further need to be clearer.
- Most pupils show a marked improvement in their attendance once they start at the school. However, a few pupils continue to miss school far too frequently.
- Most pupils' education, health and care plans are of good quality. However, the school does not have a trained special educational needs coordinator. Such an appointment would further strengthen provision. Some plans for older pupils do not set out clearly enough the help that pupils need to successfully secure a place in further education, employment or training when they leave the school.

### 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 quality of leadership and management, by:
  - producing sharper plans for improvement that set out more clearly the actions needed to further improve pupils' outcomes
  - developing the skills of trustees so that they more fully understand their responsibilities
  - appointing and training a qualified teacher to undertake the role of the special educational needs coordinator.
- Reduce the number of pupils who fail to secure places in further education, employment or training when they leave the school, by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to meet different employers
  - setting ambitious outcomes in pupils' education, health and care plans, so that pupils are more ready to take their next steps when they leave the school.
- Improve the attendance of pupils who miss school regularly.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Senior leaders, trustees and the wider staff demonstrate a clear commitment to re-engaging pupils who have been excluded from mainstream education. They provide an effective alternative model of education, based on small group sizes and positive relationships, which helps many pupils get back on their feet.
- Leaders and trustees have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders provide teachers and other adults with good opportunities to develop their practice. Teachers welcome the opportunity to undertake courses and to learn from one another. Morale and teamwork across the staff is good and contributes well to the smooth running of the school.
- Leaders manage the performance of teachers effectively through an annual appraisal cycle. This ensures that leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and provide teachers with helpful feedback. Monitoring responsibilities are widely shared, ensuring that teachers contribute to the checks made on pupils' books and the accuracy of assessments.
- Teachers are all actively involved in writing education, health and care plans and therefore know how they should contribute to achieving each pupil's identified outcomes. However, there is no member of staff with specific responsibility for special educational needs and so overall leadership and training are not as strong as they could be, even though funding is being used effectively. Each year, a number of pupils make sufficiently good progress, both academically and behaviourally, to be reintegrated back into mainstream education.
- The school provides a sufficiently broad programme of learning. English and mathematics are taught discretely and, for the younger pupils, there are good topics which integrate learning across science, history, geography and art. All older pupils follow a core programme of English, mathematics and information and communication technology and have the opportunity to choose the subjects they enjoy from different vocational training courses. Pupils of all ages also follow a programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education, which includes well-chosen topics covering morality, the rule of law and personal safety. Consequently, there is good provision in place for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The curriculum is enhanced with a range of visits beyond the school to places that pupils are unlikely to visit outside of school, such as a farm and the Beamish Museum.
- Leaders ensure, through their policies and practice, that equality of opportunity and fundamental British values are successfully integrated into programmes of learning.
- Leaders have developed an effective model of rewards and sanctions that help pupils to increasingly moderate their behaviour. Thorough records are kept of all incidents of poor behaviour, including times when teachers have had to restrain pupils. Although some poor behaviour happens, particularly when pupils first join the school, incidents tend to decline over time. Pupils consistently told the inspector that the school's approach had helped them to improve their attitude to learning.
- The timing of this inspection was brought forward at the request of the Department for Education, because complaints had raised concerns about safeguarding in the school. The

inspection found no evidence to substantiate the allegations made. Members of staff respond calmly and professionally when confronted with challenging behaviour, drawing upon the training they receive. Pupils were clear that adults in the school deal effectively with bullying, when it occurs.

- Although leaders are ambitious for pupils, their plans for improvement are limited and it is unclear how some weaker aspects of the school's work will be addressed. For example, planning does not make clear how the school will reduce the number of pupils who do not progress into further education, employment or training, or how the poor attendance of some pupils will be improved.
- Leaders have not ensured that the education, health and care plans of some older pupils are ambitious enough. In particular, plans do not give enough attention to ensuring that pupils make a successful transition into further education, employment or training.

## **Governance**

- Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes to the membership of the board of trustees, including the appointment of a new chair. The school has informed the Department for Education of these changes. As a result, the board is more active than in the past.
- Trustees are ambitious for the development and expansion of the school. They are in the process of extending the premises to provide more space and better resources for younger pupils. Trustees intend to request a material change inspection in due course.
- Although trustees are kept well informed about the school's work by the headteacher and are guided to take the right decisions, they have a limited understanding of their responsibilities in some areas of school life.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's safeguarding policy is up to date and is published on the school website. The school has additional policies governing the school's approach to bullying and the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- All members of staff and trustees have been subject to the required disclosure and barring checks. All members of staff completed appropriate training this year, which has contributed to a healthy safeguarding culture across the school.
- Pupils are well supervised at all times. Sensible actions have been taken to ensure that the premises are secure. A thorough set of risk assessments have been completed covering the use of workshops and any trips out of school.
- Leaders keep good records of the actions they take to safeguard pupils. They work effectively with social services and other agencies, including the police, when necessary.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Consistently good teaching across the age range ensures that most pupils re-engage with learning. Most pupils respond positively to the high level of attention staff provide. A culture of regular praise and rewards builds pupils' self-esteem and many become

confident to take part actively in lessons.

- Although some pupils are unwilling to apply themselves to English or mathematics, teachers persevere doggedly. Pupils' workbooks show that reading, writing and mathematics activities are completed each day. More extended pieces of writing are undertaken at least once a week. This work shows that pupils become more confident to express their ideas and feelings, and more accurate in their use of basic spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- In mathematics many pupils become adept at mental calculation. Teachers are good at explaining mathematical methods and ask effective questions that push pupils to explain how they arrive at answers. As a result, pupils are helped to learn from one another effectively.
- Pupils told the inspector that they feel they make better progress at Get U Started Training because the teachers are kinder and more patient. Teaching assistants are also continually attentive, but ensure that they allow pupils to complete tasks for themselves.
- Older pupils develop confidence in vocational subjects because teaching is very clear and tasks are well designed. For example, pupils were able to check and service the braking and exhaust systems on a car. They could answer questions using correct terminology and demonstrated safe working practices.
- Teachers regularly hold 'learning meetings' with groups of pupils to help them to reflect on their behaviour, attitudes and progress. Teachers use these sessions to challenge any use of derogatory behaviour. These sessions help pupils to increasingly follow the school's code of conduct and to meet teachers' expectations.
- Teachers have effective systems in place to assess each pupil's grasp of reading, writing and mathematics when they enter the school. Each pupil's work is regularly assessed and their progress is carefully tracked. Teachers make good use of this information when they meet each week to plan lessons together.
- Teachers provide parents with regular written information on their children's progress. Parents spoke positively to the inspector about the phone calls they receive each Friday, informing them about their child's conduct, attendance and progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils enter the school with low self-confidence and low self-esteem. The staff do much to address this through the high level of individual attention they provide and through the regular use of praise.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at the school. They comment on the friendliness and good sense of humour common across the staff.
- Teachers are very patient and give pupils time to think and respond to the tasks provided. As a result, most pupils work calmly in lessons. When pupils become more agitated, the staff are good at calming the situation.
- The curriculum provides ample opportunities for pupils to learn about risks to their safety.

Lessons cover online safety, drugs, alcohol and dangerous driving.

- The school provides pupils with some impartial careers guidance from a local authority adviser and some opportunities to visit further education colleges and careers fairs. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to meet or visit local employers.
- Leaders make thorough checks on the welfare, attendance and progress of pupils who attend alternative provision.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils make significant improvements to their behaviour and improve their attitude to learning and respect for others.
- Most pupils are willing participants in lessons. They are usually polite and supportive of one another. Although some pupils do not enjoy writing, they are prepared to try.
- Through discussions with younger and older pupils, it was clear that all pupils feel that they are more able to cope in the environment the school provides. As a result, most feel that their behaviour outside of school has also improved.
- Most pupils take reasonable care and pride in their presentation and handwriting. They respond positively to the comments that teachers provide and take steps to improve their work.
- The overall attendance of primary-aged pupils is close to that seen in primary schools nationally. For many younger pupils, this marks a considerable improvement on their previous history of attendance. The attendance of older pupils is more variable, however, and some choose to attend school infrequently. Leaders have employed some strategies in an attempt to improve the attendance of some older pupils, including arranging suitable alternative provision for some, but for others, little is currently being done to remedy the situation.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Most pupils make good progress from low starting points. Primary-aged pupils apply themselves well in English and mathematics and show interest in topics that skilfully integrate different subjects. Older pupils also make good progress in English and mathematics. Last year, all pupils who completed Year 11 left the school with at least one recognised qualification in English and mathematics and most left with further qualifications in vocational subjects.
- Pupils enter the school having had disrupted school careers. Many have missed large parts of their education through poor attendance and exclusion. As a result, almost all enter with knowledge and skills well below that expected for their age.
- Younger pupils make good progress because they respond positively to the small group teaching and high level of attention they receive. They increasingly learn to persevere and sustain their concentration. They make good progress in reading and writing because adults consistently follow policies and procedures designed to improve their phonics skills and handwriting.
- Younger pupils also show an increasingly good grasp of mathematics. Some are adept at

mental mathematics and can draw upon different strategies to solve calculations.

- Older pupils develop secure basic skills in English, mathematics and information and computer technology through the accredited programmes they follow. The school is accredited to provide GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics, although, to date, very few pupils have attained sufficiently well to be entered for these courses.
- Pupils develop secure skills in construction and motor vehicle engineering because of good teaching and instruction. Most pupils enjoy and show aptitude when working in the school's vocational workshops.
- The few pupils who attend alternative provision make steady progress and achieve accredited qualifications through their placements.
- Although pupils leave the school with at least one accredited qualification, not all secure places in further education, employment or training. Last year, 40% of pupils who left the school failed to do so. Leaders' plans for improvement do not show how this will be addressed clearly enough.

## School details

Unique reference number	137385
DfE registration number	929/6002
Inspection number	10051859

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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Get U Started Training Ltd
Chair	William Gibb
Headteacher	Philip Gallagher
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,675 to £19,500 annually
Telephone number	01670 850943
Website	<a href="http://www.getustartedtraining.org.uk">www.getustartedtraining.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@getustartedtraining.org.uk">admin@getustartedtraining.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	19–21 January 2016

## Information about this school

- Get U Started Training was established in 2004 and is a not-for-profit charity. The proprietor is Get U Started Training Limited.
- The headteacher is also a trustee of Get U Started Training Limited.
- The school is situated in a residential area close to the centre of Ashington in the north-east of England. It occupies a two-storey building formerly used as a training establishment.
- The school is an independent special school catering for pupils who have been excluded



or who are at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools.

- Nearly all pupils have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. The large majority of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school mission is to 'foster the self-confidence, self-esteem and independence of all in a climate of growth and opportunity that will enable pupils to achieve the highest standards'.
- Pupils typically join the school at different times across the school year. Pupils are placed at the school by the local authority or directly by schools. If pupils make sufficiently good progress, some return to mainstream education. Older pupils typically stay on roll until the end of Year 11. A few pupils stay on after Year 11 to complete qualifications.
- There are 37 pupils currently on roll. Fifteen pupils are of primary school age and 22 are of secondary school age. Currently, all primary-aged pupils are boys.
- The school uses three alternative providers. The alternative providers used are Engage, Educ8 and Kirkley Hall. Pupils attend on a part-time basis.
- The school was last inspected in January 2016, when it was judged to be a good school and met all of the independent school standards.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education earlier in the cycle than previously planned.
- The inspector visited lessons across all ages and across a broad range of subjects including academic and vocational learning. A number of observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. During observations, the inspector sampled pupils' books and talked to pupils in order to evaluate the quality of their current work. In addition, the inspector scrutinised in detail a sample of work from primary-aged pupils.
- Observations were made of pupils' behaviour both inside the school and in the outside area at social times.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the chair and one other member of the board of trustees. Discussions were held with teachers, a group of younger pupils and a group of older pupils.
- The inspector also visited one of the alternative providers used by the school.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised including the school's policies, assessment information, checks made by leaders on the quality of teaching, safeguarding information and a range of health and safety information, in order to assess the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspection took account of the 10 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. The inspector also held discussions with several parents. There were no responses to Ofsted's online parental survey, Parent View.

## Inspection team

Chris Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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