

Pathway to Success at Kingsbury Training

Independent special school inspection report

DCSF registration number	330/6208
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135898
Inspection number	353855
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Reporting inspector	Mike Kell

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A¹ of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

The school is located in a quiet cul-de-sac in a suburb just to the north of Birmingham city centre. It occupies a listed building, which was once a Victorian workhouse, in an urban conservation area. The site comprises a two-storey building of teaching, catering and administrative areas, plus a number of specialist workshops that are reached by crossing an outside yard. All students are in Years 10 or 11 and are referred to the school directly by their mainstream schools. This is to prevent possible exclusion because of concerns about their behaviour and/or attendance. Students are, therefore, on the registers of both their mainstream school and Pathway to Success and they divide their time between the two. Four days per week is the maximum time that students can attend Pathway to Success, and four of the current ten students are in this position. The remainder attend for one to three days. All current students are boys, and two of them have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

The school's aims can be summarised as, 'to give students the relevant and useable skills that help to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life'. This is the first time that the school has been inspected.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. It meets its broad aims by working successfully with students' mainstream schools to provide an education that interests and motivates disaffected young people. Therefore, most improve their attendance and develop more positive attitudes. Teaching is satisfactory, as is the quality of the curriculum. Consequently, students make satisfactory progress in their learning. The school's safeguarding arrangements are not sufficient to meet all of the requirements. While some safeguarding policies and procedures are securely in place, others, such as those relating to the suitability of staff who are not directly employed by the school, are not robust enough. The school meets the majority of other regulations.

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

Feeder schools see Pathway to Success as an integral component of the range of educational provision that is available locally for older secondary-aged students. One mainstream school commented that it saw the school as a first point of call as an alternative placement for young people who need more work-based learning than it can offer. The learning and personal needs of the two students with a statement of special educational needs are met adequately.

Pathway to Success negotiates each student's curriculum, and hence timetable, with their mainstream school. Depending on the agreed pattern of attendance, students may just pursue lessons in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, or only vocational courses, or a combination of the two. In practice, the overwhelming majority follow only vocational courses combined with a personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. Thus, the combination of learning activities is personalised for each student. This curriculum is satisfactory. A practical, vocational curriculum such as this matches students' interests and it meets their needs and capabilities. Students achieve success in accredited vocational courses, such as City and Guilds construction awards in a variety of trades, and they also acquire other recognition for their work, such as a certificate in first aid.

Students learn at a satisfactory rate in lessons and they make satisfactory progress. Staff have practical building trades' experience and skills and so they relate workshop instruction to a building site context well. They generally have good relationships with students and they make behaviour expectations clear. Although the quality of the teaching is satisfactory overall, the level of challenge presented by work is not always as high as it might be and lesson design does not always make the most efficient use of time. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Students' performance is assessed in each unit that they study in terms of their competence in specific, designated tasks, such as painting a timber window frame, or constructing a cavity wall with recess, but there is not always a clear link between previous achievement and current activities. The school is making good progress in getting students to evaluate their own work.

Despite the fact no student currently follows a discrete numeracy or literacy course, staff use practical lessons in the different building trades to reinforce these key skills effectively. A particularly positive feature of lessons is the way in which students are required to apply classroom-based learning in a practical context. Therefore, numeracy and literacy skills are routinely promoted through activities such as reading drawings, measuring and problem solving. The construction-based courses also give students knowledge and understanding from other curriculum areas. For instance, elements of science are covered when materials are examined in brickwork and painting and decorating, and features of design and technology figure highly in carpentry and joinery sessions. The school's PSHE programme is also taught with one eye on the vocational curriculum that students follow; it comprises topics that the students consider relevant because they are appropriate for their age group and likely occupation, and so activities around aspects of personal development like

teamwork feature highly. Visits to building sites are used effectively to reinforce the dangers of working in the construction industry as well as the practical and personal skills required to be successful.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, cultural development is satisfactory. Most re-engage with education by going to school more often, by improving their punctuality, and by showing increased interest in learning. By achieving success in practical tasks, students show greater enjoyment of being at school. They gain in confidence and self-esteem as a result. Standards of behaviour are satisfactory.

Students agree that they are prepared well for leaving school. The trade skills that they gain, supported by accreditations, are recognised by prospective employers. Students also develop the ability to work independently and safely. They have few opportunities to contribute to the school community because of their patterns of attendance, but there is teamwork and collaborative working on occasions. Students develop good understanding of the importance of making informed choices and the consequences of 'bad' decisions. They learn quickly from instructors' strict adherence to appropriate procedures and acceptable behaviour in workshops. Practical vocational work encourages students to take a pride in the finished product and instructors' expectations of appropriate behaviour in potentially dangerous workplace situations encourage students to take responsibility for themselves and others.

Students on longer, full-time placements have the opportunity to follow an accredited citizenship course that includes studying public organisations and institutions as well as consideration of living in modern multicultural Britain. The vast majority of students attend for much shorter periods and so their formal learning about citizenship takes place in their mainstream schools. Pathway to Success supports this satisfactorily through off-site visits. Racial and cultural harmony is promoted through the welcoming and tolerant general culture and ethos that is engendered by staff from different ethnic backgrounds.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The welfare, health and safety of students are satisfactory. Most students confirm that they feel safe in school and that staff care about them, and their parents and mainstream schools agree that the school is safe. The school is particularly effective in constantly reinforcing building site safety in preparation for students leaving school and moving into work. All the necessary fire, electrical equipment and other health and safety checks are carried out routinely. They are supported by a variety of policies and procedures and a good level of staff supervision aimed at securing a safe environment. Workshop practice is dictated by the relevant health and safety regulations, although the first aid policy is not sufficiently detailed or comprehensive. Anti-bullying and behaviour procedures encourage good behaviour, and in cases of misbehaviour sanctions are administered fairly and recorded appropriately. There is a

policy for maintaining students' safety when they are off-site, but it lacks all the required detail because it does not follow best practice guidelines.

Neither the admission, nor the attendance, register is maintained correctly. The former does not have an alphabetical index of students, and students' names and schools are not recorded at the level of detail that is required. The attendance register is untidy and some information is not clear because of this. The register was not up to date at the time of the inspection, contains unexplained gaps and does not indicate when students have left.

The school's effective three-year action plan ensures that it complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended.³

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

There are robust procedures in place for ensuring that the school's staff are suitable for working with children. Procedures ensure that a range of personal checks are made, such as to confirm identity and qualifications, and all prospective employees are checked at an enhanced level with the Criminal Records Bureau. The school also carries out additional checks if required, such as on prospective staff who have lived outside the United Kingdom, as well as confirming their right to work here.

The school is less vigilant in the way in which it works with employment agencies when seeking short-term cover staff. Its contractual arrangement with agencies is not sufficiently robust in insisting that such employment businesses carry out all of the mandatory checks that are required and that they report any disclosures that come to light. Consequently, the school does not maintain an accurate single central register in relation to staff not directly employed by the school.

School's premises and accommodation

The school meets all requirements in respect of its site. Although the school is housed in an old building, the accommodation is weatherproof and fit for purpose. The fabric of the building is maintained to an adequate state of repair and decoration, and floor coverings are in satisfactory condition. Rooms are sufficiently light, airy, quiet and warm, and building trade workshops are appropriately equipped for practical activities. Washroom and medical room facilities meet requirements, as does the kitchen area; food is prepared hygienically. Students are able to enter and leave the building safely.

³ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/ukpga_19950050_en_1

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides virtually all the information that it is required to give to parents and prospective parents, although it fails to send out a copy of its safeguarding policy. Between them, the school prospectus and the student induction package give parents detailed information about the school and how it operates. These documents also list additional policies and procedures that parents can request to see. However, these lists are incomplete. The school gives no indication as to how it meets the needs of students whose first language is not English, and it does not inform parents about the number of formal complaints that have been made. Parents and partner schools confirm that they receive good information about students' progress.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has developed a concise but comprehensive policy and associated procedures that comply with all regulations. They enable parents and carers to lodge a complaint at informal and formal levels, although no complaints have progressed to the formal stage since the school opened.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.⁴

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

- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school which has regard to DCSF guidance Health and safety of pupils on educational visits (DCSF ref:HSPV2)⁵ (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- write and implement a policy on first aid (paragraph 3(6))
- maintain an admission register and an attendance register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006?⁶ (paragraph 3(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

⁴ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm

⁵ <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/HSPV2.pdf>

⁶ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/20061751.htm

- ensure that no person supplied by an employment business (including an agency) begins work at the school unless the proprietor has received written confirmation from the employment business that it has carried out all required checks relating to the individual's suitability to work with children (paragraph 4A(3-5))
- include in any contractual arrangements with an employment business, the requirements set out in paragraphs 4A(3), including a requirement to supply a copy of a CRB certificate that contains any information (paragraph 4A(7))
- in relation to staff not directly employed by the school, ensure that the single central register shows whether written notification has been received from the employment business that it has carried out all the required checks referred to in 4C(2) (paragraph 4C(4)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- make available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(3)(b))
- make available to parents details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(3)(f))
- send to parents of pupils (and of prospective parents on request) a copy of their safeguarding children policy as prepared under paragraph 3(2)(b) (paragraph 6(4)).

Inspection judgement recording form

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

Name of school	Pathway to Success at Kingsbury Training		
DCSF number	330/6208		
Unique reference number (URN)	135898		
Type of school	Independent special school (behavioural, emotional and social difficulties)		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 2009		
Age range of pupils	14–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 4	Girls: 0	Total: 4
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 0	Total: 6
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,120 (full-time)		
Address of school	The Gardens Erdington Birmingham B23 6AG		
Telephone number	0121 384 4040		
Fax number	0121 384 4040		
Email address	pathwaytosuccess@kingsburytraining.com		
Headteacher	Ms Yvonne Lewis		
Proprietor	Mr Anthony Danbury		
Reporting inspector	Mike Kell		
Dates of inspection	10–11 June 2010		