

Future Education

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	926/6160
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135859
Inspection number	353858
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Heather Yaxley

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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 Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

This is the first inspection of Future Education since its opening in June 2009. The school grew out of the work of a local youth project and, as arrangements with the local authority became more formal, the school sought registration with the then DCSF under the proprietorship of NR5 Project, a charitable trust (also known as Future Projects). The school is just one part of Future Projects' work with young people and adults in the North Earlham, Larkman and Marlpit area of Norwich. The school is registered to admit up to 28 students between the ages of 14 and 16 years and there are currently 26 students on roll. All students are placed and funded by Norfolk County Council and all have learning needs associated with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. All students have a history of poor attendance, non-attendance or exclusion from their previous schools. Students often have contact with local youth offending teams, as well as support for drug and alcohol misuse. Eight students have a statement of special educational needs. One student is looked after by the local authority. Almost all students are from White British backgrounds. The school philosophy is to, 'offer a holistic and supportive educational programme to Year 10 and 11 students which incorporates both curriculum and non-curriculum subjects and which in turn will help to improve both the educational achievements and the life chances of our students.' At the time of this inspection, all Year 11 students were on study leave.

Evaluation of the school

Future Education provides its students with a good standard of education and a satisfactory standard of welfare, health and safety. Although only a year since its registration, the school has successfully built upon the work that it has been doing with troubled teenagers over many years. The most striking feature is the way that it successfully places high importance on education and examination success alongside supporting students' social and emotional development. The local authority, students and their families speak very highly of the school. All but one of the regulations is met and this one concerns the appropriate training of designated persons for child protection. All other safeguarding requirements are met.

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

The quality of education is good because the curriculum, teaching and assessment are all good, particularly in relation to how well they meet the needs of the students. The curriculum has three particular strengths; a suitably reduced timetable, the facility to gain the equivalent of eight good GCSE passes, and good opportunities for social and cultural development. Students are in school between 9.15am and 2.15pm and at first glance this appears to be short on time available for teaching. However, the time is used very effectively to maintain students' concentration while also covering course requirements sufficiently. Full GCSEs in English, mathematics, science and art are supplemented by BTEC courses in countryside and environment, and information and communication practitioners, to give students a good balanced education that facilitates further education for those that want to go on to college. A range of visits and visitors supports students' studies as well as providing them with opportunities to see and do things that they would not otherwise have experienced. Examples include work at a local conservation area that accredits their BTEC course, and visits to coastal areas, art galleries and restaurants that increase students' understanding of social and cultural difference. The citizenship programme supports students' social development even further by covering a range of subjects that are particularly pertinent to their personal, social and health needs. Accordingly, drug and substance misuse, sexual health, personal responsibility and law enforcement have a high profile and students benefit from the expertise of outside professionals who come into school to contribute to the programmes.

The schemes of work for each subject go beyond the general coverage required for examinations. Staff work hard to produce detailed plans that have a good balance of activities that will appeal to students' interests and needs as well as providing them with the knowledge and concepts required. This includes a range of practical activities that inject fun and memorable experiences. Dissecting rats in science, watching clips from contemporary films in English and organising a local Christmas party are but a few examples.

Having audited the effectiveness of the curriculum, staff are making well founded changes for the next academic year and this demonstrates that there is flexibility within the curriculum to respond to students' needs. Additional lessons are to be added for English, mathematics and science so that there is more time to complete course work to a higher standard, and the addition of a course in creative media will give students a choice of BTEC courses.

The curriculum is delivered by part-time teachers and project workers. The good level of detail in the schemes of work and lesson plans supports those who are not qualified teachers well, contributing to the quality of teaching, which is characteristically good. Students are taught in small groups and this suits their learning well. Good behaviour management by staff makes a significant contribution to students' concentration, completion of activities and their enjoyment of learning. Relationships are good and this helps to set up an environment that is highly focused on the business of education and acceptable social behaviour. The use of support

staff in lessons is not always well thought through and, as a result, students are sometimes too dependent on adults for help. In the same way, planned opportunities for students to show what they can do by themselves are not systematically built into lesson plans so opportunities are missed to see how they can work more independently or how they are achieving their individual targets. Assessment in lessons is good in other respects including questions, using misconceptions to extend thinking, and verbal and written feedback. Teaching resources are adequate for what teachers need to deliver the curriculum and are improving as the curriculum develops. The recent reorganisation of computers in classrooms rather than in a suite is a sensible one, giving students access to computers in all lessons.

End of unit assessments and examination results show that students can make rapid progress in all subjects and can get the grades that they need to continue their education at college. Good teaching, a good curriculum and good pastoral support make this happen. But students' achievements are very clearly closely linked to their rates of attendance and the support that they get from their families. When these things come together, students make good progress but this is not the case for a significant minority and for this reason progress is satisfactory overall. Nevertheless, the school works very hard to improve attendance, knowing that this is a key to the students' academic success and personal wellbeing. For example, students are offered alternative timetables, including individual lessons selected by the students themselves, to try and improve attendance, which has had some success.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

In the same way that students' academic progress is satisfactory overall, their personal development is similarly satisfactory because not all students attend sufficiently to take advantage of the good education on offer at the school. Nevertheless, even for those with poor attendance, of the 14 students now completing Y11, 12 have stayed within education and 13 came into school to take all of their examinations. The school's evidence from the local police and workers in the neighbourhood suggest that the changes in behaviour, together with improved school attendance, help some students to make a more positive contribution to the community. They start to make better decisions and behave in a more socially acceptable way.

In school, students arrive to lessons promptly and ready to learn. Their behaviour is generally good and when incidents occur they are quickly resolved. They learn how to have productive relationships with staff and with one another. They also develop an increasing awareness of the lives of others through curricular activities off-site and this promotes tolerance and respect for different cultures and traditions. All of these things have a positive impact on students' self-esteem, enjoyment of education and access to further studies.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

This aspect of the school's work is satisfactory because although pastoral support is good and a full range of policies to support their wellbeing are in place, students do not always make sufficient changes that will help them to stay safe and healthy. For example, almost all students continue to smoke and many misuse drugs and alcohol. In addition, although staff have undertaken a range of relevant training such as for drug awareness, implementation of the Common Assessment Framework and safety on school trips, the designated person for child protection has not done the required level of training. Nevertheless, the designated person has a good understanding of the procedures to take, as demonstrated by the referrals that have been made to the appropriate authorities. All other staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in this respect.

The school not only has a full range of policies to promote students' wellbeing, but these policies have been designed with their specific needs in mind. Roles, responsibilities and consequences are well covered for a range of potential eventualities and are well understood by staff, students and their families. The consistency with which staff apply school policies is a particular strength and contributes significantly to students' welfare, health and safety because behavioural expectations are made clear and consistently upheld. Students may not agree with the behaviour policy when things are difficult but accept that they are treated fairly on reflection. The 'three-strikes' rule and use of the time-out room work well to help students 'stop and start again' when they struggle to stick to the rules and also help classmates to remain focused on their work. Emotional support and advocacy for the students is especially facilitated by project workers. Each of the four tutor groups has a project worker that stays with their group of students throughout Years 10 and 11. They coordinate information about the progress, targets, needs and concerns for individuals in their group. This works well to keep all staff informed and, as a result, all staff know all of the students very well. This support is extended to students after they leave the school. School staff are often their first port of call, where they know they can bring their worries or queries and get good advice.

The school has a suitable plan in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. This and other policies are reviewed regularly by the school manager, and the trustees are becoming more involved in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities. The work of the recently appointed site manager for the trust has made a good start in bringing the trust's health and safety provision up to date and there is good attention to the particular needs of the school within generic policies and procedures.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school manager is very thorough with the appointment of staff and the way that personnel files are kept. Records of the suitability checks made on staff prior to their appointment are collated on a suitable single central register.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation enable all students to learn effectively and safely. The school operates out of a series of well maintained portakabins in the centre of a residential housing estate. The site is also the centre for the trustees' media and arts work with the community, which extends beyond the school day and term times. There are four large classrooms, including one that is dedicated to science and art teaching, a large 'break' room that can also accommodate students when they are ill, a 'time-out' room and an office. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards and computers.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Students' families receive three reports during the two years students spend at the school, linked to assessment periods. These reports provide useful information showing students' progress, attainment and attitudes. A comprehensive prospectus and handbook provide all of the required information about the school. Plans are in place to provide the local authority with details of income received and expenses incurred for this academic year.

Procedures for handling complaints

The complaints policy meets all of the requirements and the school has received no complaints this year.

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 the one listed below.³

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

- provide training for designated persons for child protection (paragraph 3(2)(b)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

³ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm

- Provide planned opportunities in lesson plans for students to show how independent they are in their learning.
- Strengthen the work of the trustees by developing their monitoring role so as to ensure that statutory responsibilities pertinent to the school side of their work are fulfilled.

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	Future Education		
DCSF number	926/6160		
Unique reference number (URN)	135859		
Type of school	Day special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social needs		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	3 June 2009		
Age range of pupils	14–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 20	Girls: 6	Total: 26
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 6	Girls: 2	Total: 8
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£10,365		
Address of school	168b Motum Road Norwich Norfolk NR5 8EG		
Telephone number	01603 250505		
Fax number	01603 508096		
Email address	d.freeman@futureprojects.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Dennis Freeman (school manager)		
Proprietor	NR5 Project (also known as Future Projects)		
Reporting inspector	Heather Yaxley HMI		
Dates of inspection	23–24 June 2010		