

Wize Up

579 Westhorne Avenue, Eltham, London SE9 6DN

Inspection dates

17–19 October 2017

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Adequate |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Wize Up provides a good quality of alternative provision to pupils who have typically experienced a disrupted education.
- The proprietor, who is also the school's headteacher, has worked effectively with her team to ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils' safety and welfare are at the centre of the school's good work. There is a unified commitment to safeguarding and pupils confirm that they feel safe.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school.
- Leaders and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teaching is generally effective in meeting pupils' needs. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve qualifications in a range of subjects. However, occasionally, pupils are uncertain of what is expected of them.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next steps. After Year 11, the overwhelming majority go on to successful college placements or apprenticeships.
- The school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour is described by pupils and parents as 'firm but fair'. Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite, respectful, cooperative and proud of their achievements.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted. Pupils regularly learn, through workshops, visiting speakers and a range of trips and experiences, about respect for people's differences. They are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school's leaders acknowledge the need to monitor the quality of teaching more frequently and consistently to ensure that teaching improves further. The school also needs to thoroughly track pupils' progress in all areas of the curriculum. Leaders have already made plans to implement a new assessment system.
- Governance is new and evolving. A chair of the management committee has recently been appointed. This committee plans to provide formal support, challenge and advice to the school's leaders.

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 effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the new management committee provides effective support, challenge and advice to the school's leaders to further improve the quality of provision
 - the existing systems for checking the quality of teaching are more frequent and consistent.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
 - pupils' progress is accurately measured, recorded and reviewed in all areas of the curriculum
 - teaching ensures that pupils understand what they need to do to complete work successfully.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor and her leadership team share a clear vision for pupils at Wize Up. They work together effectively to ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- All staff are committed to, and positive about, their contribution to the school. They describe Wize Up as a 'family'.
- Leaders have ensured that the school provides pupils with an inclusive and caring environment. The school has a calm atmosphere, with a focus on learning and high expectations for pupils' achievement. The school's commitment to preparing pupils for life in London and Britain as well-rounded citizens, and to teaching pupils about equality, is very strong.
- Parents are very positive about their experiences of the school. They say how communicative staff are, and comment on the effectiveness of the personalised approach taken to meet their children's needs. The three parents spoken to said, 'My child is doing better than I ever thought they would', 'The school is an amazing place – I can't fault them and yet I was the person who didn't want my child to go to an alternative provision. Now I don't want them to leave', and 'Wize Up is the best thing to ever have happened to our child'.
- The curriculum is well designed to meet pupils' needs. It includes all the required areas of learning as well as regular creative projects. Pupils at key stage 4 have a number of options at GCSE. This means that, as well as studying English, mathematics and science, they can choose to take courses leading to qualifications in citizenship; personal, social, health and economic education; religious education; biology; computing and English literature.
- The quality of careers education is strong. Pupils receive regular, impartial information, advice and guidance from an external careers adviser who helps them plan for their next steps, including accompanying them on college visits and interviews.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of activities, trips and visiting speakers. For example, in the past year alone, pupils have enjoyed a visiting theatre group who taught pupils about sexual exploitation; completed first-aid training; attended museums, theatres and religious settings; hosted charity events; picked litter for the local community and attended a number of careers events. These activities are only a few examples and have a significantly positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In addition, the inspector observed all pupils contributing maturely to their youth council.
- There is an established programme for monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This involves formal termly visits to classrooms and regular checks on pupils' workbooks. It is well linked to the school's system of supervision and appraisal. However, more frequent and consistent monitoring, especially of new teachers, would help to raise standards further.

Governance

- There are suitable plans in place to strengthen governance. Although a management committee was formed some time ago, a chair was only appointed very recently and the terms of reference are currently being agreed. The intention is to regularly and formally review all aspects of the school, and to provide external support, challenge and advice to the proprietor and leaders. Members of the management committee will be involved in the policy review cycle, consider pupils' progress information and check that the school is continuing to meet all the independent school standards.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's strong systems to ensure pupils' safety are understood by all staff. Leaders offer a genuine 'open door' policy to staff, pupils and parents. Concerns are raised quickly, documented thoroughly and referred on to external agencies, where necessary.
- The inspector's conversations with the local authority's designated officer for safeguarding confirmed that the school's leaders work in partnership with external professionals and investigate concerns thoroughly. Leaders are not afraid to make difficult decisions in the interests of pupils' safety.
- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the most recent statutory guidance and is published on the school's website alongside all other required policies and information. All relevant staff training, including for those who lead on safeguarding and in relation to the 'Prevent' duty, is up to date.
- Leaders take effective action to minimise risks to pupils, including where they attend weekly off-site training.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is typically good. Teaching enables pupils, who have generally had disrupted educational histories and experienced exclusion from mainstream schools, to re-engage with learning and begin to make up for lost time.
- Teachers balance a patient, caring and nurturing approach with high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Teachers' thoughtful, individualised planning captures pupils' imaginations and develops their confidence and self-esteem to question, participate and work hard. The most able pupils are appropriately challenged.
- Teachers develop pupils' reading skills well and the expectation that they will produce high-quality extended writing is the norm.
- Pupils have excellent relationships with staff, whom they trust. Pupils are appropriately supported, including by well-deployed support workers and mentors.
- Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour in class is effective. No incidents of challenging behaviour were observed during the inspection.
- Checks on pupils' core skills on entry to the school help teachers to plan effective lessons. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics, as well as in a range of other subjects, is tracked and reviewed over time. However, this is not consistently the case in all areas of

learning. Leaders have already begun work to ensure that pupils' progress is accurately measured, recorded and reviewed in all areas of the curriculum including, for example, physical education.

- On occasion, teaching lacks clarity of explanation. As a result, pupils are confused about what is expected of them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say they feel and are safe at Wize Up. They say bullying is exceptionally rare and that they know all staff members are always available to support them, including their headteacher, whom they report to at the end of every day.
- Pupils are taught effectively about how to keep themselves safe, including online.
- Pupils often self-refer for the extra support and guidance the school offers. Pupils say that the availability of counselling is helpful in meeting their emotional needs.
- The school monitors pupils' good social and emotional development anecdotally and in case studies. Leaders are currently developing a more consistent system to record pupils' personal improvement, especially in relation to their attitudes to learning, social skills and emotional well-being.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils understand the expectations at Wize Up. They know and respect the detailed code of conduct. Pupils are respectful, kind, helpful and focused on their learning.
- The few incidents of serious misbehaviour are dealt with safely and effectively, and recorded carefully. Staff are clear about pupils' 'triggers', and likes and dislikes, and tailor their teaching accordingly. Daily morning briefings are a helpful tool in ensuring that the staff team shares concerns and plans effectively to meet pupils' needs.
- The attendance and punctuality of most pupils are good. This is a considerable achievement in itself because so many pupils arrive at the school with histories of school refusal. There are a small number of pupils who do not attend or whose attendance is cause for concern. In these instances, leaders do all they can to support pupils and their parents to improve, including through home visits and referrals to the relevant external agencies.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils typically arrive at Wize Up with low starting points, poor self-esteem and a lack of confidence in their abilities. They often have significant gaps in their education and many have previously refused to attend school.

- On arrival, the school rightly prioritises getting to know pupils, making them feel safe and quickly finding out what their interests are. Teaching and support are then tailored to meet their individual needs. As a result, they make significant progress socially, emotionally and personally.
- From their typically low academic starting points, the school's information shows that pupils make good progress across a range of subjects, including in English language, English literature, mathematics, citizenship, religious education, science, computing, and personal, social, health and economic education.
- The vast majority of pupils are in key stage 4. As well as achieving good outcomes at GCSE and in functional skills qualifications, they are prepared well for their next steps. For example, of the Year 11 pupils who left the school in July 2017, all are now successfully learning in college placements or are working as apprentices.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 136092 |
| DfE registration number | 203/6040 |
| Inspection number | 10035808 |

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.

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| Type of school | Alternative provision |
| School category | Independent special school |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 19 |
| Number of part-time pupils | None |
| Proprietor | Lorretta Boyd |
| Chair | Charlotte Pearce Cornish |
| Headteacher | Lorretta Boyd |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £13,650 to £15,015 |
| Telephone number | 020 8859 9664 |
| Website | www.wize-up.org.uk |
| Email address | info@wize-up.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 11–13 March 2014 |

Information about this school

- Wize Up is a small independent day school in the London Borough of Greenwich.
- It provides alternative provision for pupils excluded from, or at risk of exclusion from, schools in a number of local authorities in the vicinity. Some pupils on short-term placements are dual registered.
- All pupils experience social, emotional and mental health difficulties. A very few have education, health and care plans.

- The school makes use of two off-site training providers: Ilderton Motor Vehicle Project, London SE8 5HB, and The Archway Project, London SE2 9BS.
- The school's previous full inspection was in March 2014. At this time, the school was judged to provide an adequate quality of provision.

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed learning in a range of subjects, some jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- The inspector met with all pupils to discuss their learning, behaviour and well-being. He also observed them participate in the youth council.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's information about pupils' progress and attendance.
- There were no contributions to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. However, the inspector considered the school's own parental survey, spoke with two parents and also met with a parent.
- The inspector had several meetings with a wide range of staff including teachers, support staff, the school's counsellor and the leadership team. He also observed a staff briefing and considered seven questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspector spoke by telephone with the chair of the school's management committee, a representative from a placing local authority and the designated officer.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including school policies, logs, evidence of staff training, and information related to safeguarding and health and safety. The inspector also toured the premises and considered additional information and evidence in relation to the independent school standards.

Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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