

The Complete Works Independent School

The Old Truman Brewery, 91 Brick Lane, London E1 6QL

Inspection dates 11–13 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Despite students' troubled backgrounds, overall, they make good progress academically and in their personal development.
- Students' achievement in English, mathematics and science is good.
- Students are not on the roll of this school for very long but teachers have found a way to help them progress well in this short period of time.
- Students leave the school much more confident and all move on to further education or get jobs.
- Leaders and managers have been effective in establishing a successful school in a short period of time. In particular, they have ensured good achievement and good teaching. They have a clear vision for further development and this vision has been translated into a challenging but realistic development programme.

It is not yet outstanding because

- While the quality of reading and writing is good overall, a few students do not do so well and require more help.
- Although teachers use a variety of teaching methods and adapt these well to help different students make progress, on a very few occasions, teachers find it difficult to teach the full ability range in a class and so this hinders progress.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The school was given one day's notice of this inspection.
- The inspector attended 13 lessons on the two campuses and spoke with staff and students. School documents, including the single central register and the child protection policy, were checked. The inspector also saw many examples of students' written and other work.
- The views expressed in 15 staff questionnaires were taken into account. There were too few responses from parents and carers on Ofsted's 'Parent View' website to take them into account.

Inspection team

Paul Armitage, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Complete Works Independent School was registered in April 2013 as a day school for up to 20 students aged from 14 to 16 years. It is located on three sites in east and south London. Its administrative offices are in Brick Lane. A second site (called by the school a 'campus') provides education for 17 students in Whitechapel and a third campus, which educates eight students, is in Bermondsey. Both campuses are housed in community centres. The school also makes use of a local gymnasium and swimming pool. There are currently 25 students on roll. Two of these are part-time.
- From 1999 to early 2013, the proprietor operated a tuition centre offering one-to-one teaching in homes, libraries and schools in the Whitechapel area. Over time, the increasing number of students using the tuition service led the proprietor to decide to register as a school.
- The large majority of students are referred to the school by two local authorities although a few are referred from other sources such as schools. All the students demonstrate extremely challenging behaviour resulting from a substantial variety of educational, psychological, physical and social needs. All have had difficulty settling into mainstream schools and the majority have a statement of special educational needs.
- A small minority of students are also on the roll of the local pupil referral unit and others also are on the rolls of local academies.
- Following a pattern established with the local authorities when the school was a tuition service, older students generally begin their education in November and then, depending on their age, leave the following July. Younger students stay an additional year. Some students stay for shorter periods.
- The school's aim is 'to educate young people creatively so as to improve their behaviour and attitudes to learning and so improve their achievement and access to further education, employment or training'.
- This is the school's first inspection.
- The school has requested a material change to increase the number on roll to 40 students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Find ways to address the weaker skills in reading and writing demonstrated by a few students.
- Find ways to address the very few occasions when teachers find it difficult to teach effectively the full range of abilities in the class.
- In collaboration with relevant authorities, seek to ensure that students arrive at the school earlier in the school year to enable them to obtain a greater benefit from the education provided.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students' achievement is good due to good teaching and a good curriculum. Taking into account their academic achievement as well as the wide-ranging personal challenges facing them when they start at the school, their progress overall is good. This judgement applies to the achievement of students taking GCSE courses and those taking functional skills courses. For a small minority of students, their achievement is outstanding. Of the eight students taking GCSEs in English, mathematics and science in 2013, all but one achieved passes, reflecting at least good progress. In English, students are best at speaking and listening. A few students are weaker at reading and writing.

This good progress in last year's examinations was due to good teaching and a range of other good support that helped students to develop a vastly improved attitude to learning. The good pass rate in functional skills courses is partly due to the careful way the courses are selected to suit the careers and other interests of the students. In consequence, students understand the reasons for studying and are keen to get good results. It is impressive that students achieve well given the nature of the issues they face but also the relatively short time they are on the school's roll. Arriving in November in their examination year, and at other times, limits the available teaching time.

The school has very good aspirations for its students. However, until now, students have been limited to taking four GCSEs in English language and literature, mathematics and science. This academic year, the school's managers have raised aspirations further by offering five GCSEs. The school now has the task of ensuring that its most able students, despite their difficulties, have the knowledge and confidence to attempt to reach the highest grades in these subjects. The school is successful in obtaining college and other places for all its leavers including, last year, a place in one of the country's most distinguished drama schools.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Students' behaviour and personal development are good overall. For a minority of students, the improvement in behaviour has been outstanding. The typical pattern is that students arrive in the school exhibiting poor behaviour. Through careful understanding of the differing social and educational needs of new arrivals, behaviour and attitudes improve rapidly. This improvement is closely monitored by staff and by the students themselves, who write their own self-assessments and set out, in writing, their aspirations. As a result of both the school's and the students' efforts, there is no disruption in class. In consequence, students' learning proceeds without interruption. There is a similar pattern of improvement in attendance which, taking into account students' circumstances, is also good. The school works very hard with local agencies to follow up every unauthorised absence and this is having a positive impact.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. When students start at the school, their thinking about themselves, others and about many aspects of life is generally negative. Through the many opportunities to explore relationships, aspirations, issues such as anger and events in the wider world, students successfully begin to understand that they have a future different from their previous experience. One example of the way in which the school challenged them during the inspection was to discuss the claim that 'once a bully always a bully' and they were also asked if it is right to 'grass' on others. Social development is good. A strong feature is the developing understanding and mutual respect that students have for each other. This is of considerable importance given the situations students may face outside school. As a result of the school's efforts and the students' positive response, there is little bullying. Overall, students clearly grow in self-confidence. One significant example is the way that students become

increasingly willing to read out loud and express opinions to fellow students.

Cultural development is good. The multicultural nature of the school means that students in their everyday interaction develop an understanding of different ways of life. This is supported by the school organising such activities as 'country days' which are workshops focusing on people's lives in different places. Staff organise trips to theatres, museums and other places of interest. In history, students study black history and in religious education, students develop their understanding of all the major faiths. Leaders ensure that when controversial and political issues are considered, that steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good and enables students to achieve well. It is a strength of the school that staff generally adjust their teaching methods to address students' strengths and weaknesses. Many of these strengths and weaknesses are identified in students' statements of special educational needs and in the individual education plans drawn up by the school. These usefully provide more detail than the statements and are an excellent assessment tool to help guide what teachers should do next and how they should do it. Teachers also mark work very thoroughly and this contributes to the careful recording of students' progress. Students understand and are very frank about what they need to do to improve.

One-to-one lessons are very successful, sometimes resulting in outstanding progress, but in a very few lessons which are given to larger groups of students, teachers are not quite so successful in finding the best way to help all the students given the wide range of abilities in the class, thus limiting progress. Senior staff are aware of this issue and staff have been considering how to address it, particularly in the context of the new target set by the school for students to achieve five GCSEs at the highest grades. Teaching assistants are well deployed in supporting students.

Staff are well qualified. Many started their professional careers in the theatre and have used their professional skills as a basis for helping young people explore and understand the human condition. The school has helped them improve their knowledge and understanding by providing good quality in-service training delivered by a local university and other providers.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The quality of the curriculum is good and enables students to learn and achieve well. It is well planned, reflecting, in particular, the requirements stipulated in the statements of special educational needs. While staff stick firmly to the requirements of the examination boards, they also take the opportunity of being flexible with the broader curriculum so as to best help students' progress. This is particularly the case in the successful one-to-one teaching that is the norm for many of the students.

The required areas of learning are provided by the school either through the GCSEs and functional skills courses selected by the students or through the additional curriculum opportunities that all students follow. Examples of these additional opportunities include 'cooking, language and culture' and 'practical ICT'. Personal and social education are given high importance because of students' backgrounds and the school also has good links with Connexions and local further education colleges. The curriculum is enriched with visitors to the school and by extra-curricular activities. A good example of this enrichment is a recent visit to a narrowboat where students have time together in a different environment.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety**Good**

The quality of students' welfare, health and safety is good. All the requirements for independent schools are met. All the required policies are in place and staff have a good understanding of these. This includes policies on health and safety, first aid, anti-bullying, behaviour and child protection. Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding and there is an appropriate number of first aiders. There is a properly completed single central register which includes the details of all persons having frequent links with the school. The school applies the correct procedures for checking the suitability of staff. Risk assessments are conducted regularly with the results properly recorded. This includes the assessments for school visits. The necessary fire checks have been carried out by a qualified outside contractor. Students are effectively supervised; admissions and attendance registers are in good order.

The school helps students understand how to be healthy, notably in personal and social education and in the cookery course which the school introduced because it was clear that its students did not know how to cook a simple meal and so look after themselves.

Leadership and management**Good**

The quality of leadership and management is good and enables students to learn and achieve well. The school's leaders and managers have worked hard to establish a successful school. When establishing the school, the proprietor had a clear vision and a pragmatic strategy based on a desire to help young people in difficulty. This has been turned into a reality. Senior managers work well together. They have a good understanding of the school through effective self-evaluation, the good tracking of students' personal and academic progress and through teacher appraisal. The trustees keep a watchful eye on all aspects of the school, including students' welfare. Liaison with local agencies, including the local authorities, is frequent and useful, not least in matters of academic achievement and safeguarding.

The accommodation is spacious and attractive with plenty of light; the complaints procedure meets requirements, and parents, carers and others are supplied with, or else are made aware of, all the required information. The proprietor has ensured that all the regulations have been met.

With reference to the request to increase the number of students to 40, the material change is recommended to the Department for Education. The accommodation, number of teachers and resources will support effectively the number of students requested.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	139601
Inspection number	429469
DfE registration number	211/6006

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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	School for students with behavioural and other challenges
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14–16 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Number of part time pupils	2
Proprietor	The Complete Works Ltd
Chair	Christian Steenberg
Headteacher	Phil Evans
Date of previous school inspection	First inspection
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13,350 - £36,075
Telephone number	0207 377 0280
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