# Focus Academy Ltd Report

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# Context of the school

Focus Academy Ltd is located in Arnos Grove in the London borough of Enfield. There are 20 students on roll, between 14 and 16 years of age. All students attended full-time education in school. One student had a statement of special educational needs. The students who attended the school had all been referred by local education authorities or schools in London. The majority of students had behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD).

The school’s aim is ‘to empower students to become effective learners and experience success’.

## Curriculum, quality of teaching and assessment: Good

The curriculum is good. It is broad and relevant. It is supported by all the required schemes of work, outline plans and timetables for the targeted age group. Schemes of work have been prepared and well implemented. The programme for personal, social, health, citizenship education and economics education (PSHCEE) is suitably documented. Topics include learning about healthy eating, staying safe, the dangers posed by illegal drugs, understanding democracy and justice, and rights and responsibilities. This enables students to develop their personal development and well being and prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

There is a major focus on developing the whole person, supporting one’s literacy and numeracy skills, information and communication technology, physical fitness and personal development and well being. Students have access to appropriate careers guidance. Opportunities include filling in application forms for colleges and work placements, writing own CVs and taking an active part in mock interviews. Work experience includes working in hairdressing, car mechanics, computer repair and catering.

Discussions with the management of the school and scrutiny of data indicate that teachers assess students’ abilities in subject areas carefully and appropriately with reference to the National Curriculum level descriptors. They use the information gained from assessments to ensure that students are suitably challenged during lessons so that they make more than expected progress.

The quality of teaching seen in the sample of lessons observed was good. Planning ensures that there is appropriate coverage of subjects and progression. Teachers plan their lessons well to meet the different learning needs, abilities and interests of individuals. Staff ask questions to test understanding and to clarify thinking. They use a good range of strategies and learning styles to fully engage students in learning. Other adult support is well deployed to support learning. Staff develop positive rapports with the students and have been successful in ensuring improved attitudes to learning. Good behaviour in lessons and around the building contributes to the calm and welcoming learning environment that pervades the school.

Students make good progress over time in relation to their starting points. They are provided with good learning experiences to help them develop their literacy and numeracy skills, ICT and personal development and well being. Learning Spanish helps students to learn about the wider world around them. As a result, students are well prepared for the experiences and responsibilities of adult life.

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils: Good

The students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is well supported by the school’s behaviour and anti-bullying policies and procedures, the school’s aim, the PSHCE programme and the support from staff and agencies, including the emergency and the social services. Students are helped to distinguish right from wrong and to respect civil and criminal law.

Students are provided with good opportunities to develop an understanding of cultural diversity and differences between people in the community in order to promote tolerance and racial harmony. The school takes advantage of its locality to help students contribute to the life of the local community. For example, in the past, students were engaged in local projects to help reduce the rate of crime and to help young people to engage in education and seek employment. Visits to places of interests, including the local Court of Justice, support from the local MP and working in partnership with other providers, including the emergency services, provide students with suitable opportunities to gain a knowledge and understanding of public institutions and services in England and to respect the working of the civil and the criminal law. The school assists students to make the right choices when faced with moral dilemmas. When political issues are discussed, a balanced presentation of different viewpoints are offered to students.

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils: Good

The school has devised and implemented its policies and procedures to safeguard children at the school. The behaviour policy has clear expectations, along with an appropriate set of rewards and sanctions and guidance on how to combat bullying. This is well implemented by staff and has resulted in significant improvement in behaviour for students over time. A suitable record is kept of sanctions imposed. The safeguarding children policy includes all of the required elements; this reflects the latest safeguarding guidance issued by the Department for Education. The designated child protection officers have received the advanced child protection training, as is required. All other members of staff have attended the relevant child protection training and know what to do should a concern arise.

A suitable health and safety policy has been produced and is well implemented. A member of staff has undertaken training in risk assessment on the premises and resources. There are procedures to assess and manage safety risks related to premises, resources and trips. Risk assessments on students are regular. Gas appliances, fire equipment and electrical appliances are tested regularly to ensure that they are safely operational. There is a fire warden in school. Fire drills are undertaken. The school has carried out the required fire risk assessment on the premises to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The admission and attendance registers are completed appropriately and meet requirements.

### Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors: Good

The school has made all of the required vetting checks on all members of staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. The school has maintained its single central register, which enables it to very that all checks are made.

### Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises consist of three large classrooms, including a designated information and communication technology suite; these are of an appropriate size and are well maintained. Other spaces are available for intervention programmes. The current washroom facilities are sufficient for staff and students. The proprietor ensures that there is a provision for students to go to when they are unwell and this is located reasonably near a toilet. The accommodation has a hand-washing facility with running water.

Suitable security arrangements are in place. Adequate external areas for play and relaxation are available in a nearby public park for which the school has conducted regular risk assessments to ensure students’ health and safety. The proprietor also ensures that students use the local leisure centre for physical activities, where they have access to showers and changing facilities under appropriate supervision.

The proprietor has conducted all the necessary checks on the school building to ensure that the acoustic conditions, sound insulation, lighting, and water supply, including labelled drinking water facilities meet requirements.

### Provision of information

The school’s provision of information for parents, carers and others has been reviewed and improved and meets requirements.

### Manner in which complaints are to be handled

# The school’s complaints policy and procedures continue to meet all of the requirements. There have been no formal complaints recorded since the opening of the school.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools:

## Good

The leadership and management of the school have demonstrated good knowledge and skills appropriate to their roles and responsibilities and have ensured that all the Independent School Standards continue to be met. Students are provided with good learning experiences to develop their personal development and well-being. They are well prepared for their futures.

**Recommendations**

Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring:

* staff consistently challenge students’ thinking in order to maximise their learning
* encourage students to share what they have learnt so that they can further improve the quality of their work