

Values Academy

51-54 Hockley Hill, Hockley, Birmingham, B18 5AQ

Inspection dates

16 December 2014

Overall outcome

Unmet independent school standards identified

Reason for the inspection

- The unannounced emergency inspection was undertaken at the request of the Department for Education and was due to concerns raised from the annual survey of students' views.
- The survey, completed by students in November 2014, identified that some students strongly disagreed with the statements in the questionnaire and had concerns about behaviour, bullying and smoking in the school.

Main findings

- Students are safe at this school and are positive about how they are helped to improve their learning and behaviour. This improvement is not something that happens overnight. It is due to the concerted efforts of staff and is underpinned by the school's 'values' curriculum. This promotes, for example, students' moral, ethical and social understanding, which helps them think about their actions on others. The improvement is also supported by staff's consistent management of their behaviour, and the school's clear rewards and sanctions system.
- Many students enter the school with a history of challenging behaviour and have been to a number of different schools prior to the Values Academy. Their individual records show that the large majority reduce the episodes of difficult behaviour quickly and often within a year from the time they join this academy. For some students with the most severe behaviour difficulties, this can take more than a year.
- Exclusion is a last resort for the school and staff implement a wide range of measures and support before considering removing a student from school. While staff help students to manage their anger well, some incidents are so severe that permanent exclusion is considered. The three permanent exclusions since September 2014 have been for violence against staff and other students, in line with the school's policy. Violence towards others is not tolerated.
- The school has a positive impact on improving students' behaviour and staff do not tolerate bullying. Students say that if any incidents occur it is often the younger, immature students, who are the instigators; this is borne out in school files. Older students in Year 10 and 11 say that they usually work harmoniously together; they say there is friendly 'banter' which makes for a positive working environment.
- Records of incidents show that issues occur mainly because of disputes among students and occasionally some friction over time between individual students who do not get on with one another. Sometimes students provoke others into negative behaviour by making comments, touching them or looking in a particular way. Staff work regularly with students to help them resist provocation but also to reduce the behaviours of the perpetrators.

- Most students view any negative actions of students as disagreements and not as bullying, as do staff. School records show little evidence of bullying, and no incidents between students that are of a racist, sexist or homophobic nature or of a type that is repeated over a period. Students say staff are vigilant in ensuring students are not put at any risk.
- Trained mentors provide a great deal of behavioural and emotional support, as well as a high level of supervision of students. The level of supervision is considerable for new students but there is a concerted approach to decrease this as students learn to manage their own behaviour, which helps them to become more independent and prepares them better for their next placement.
- Students are extremely positive about how mentors support them but recognise that they themselves have anger issues and that they can provoke others just by a movement or a look. They are able to identify what they can do to avoid such situations, keeping themselves and others safe. A strong feature is the way staff and students reflect on what they do, why they do it and what they could do to improve. It is clear that these features, together with students' increasing capacity to build resilience and deal with their own actions and reactions are key elements at the heart of the school's success.
- Staff demonstrate a thorough knowledge of students' individual needs and circumstances. At least weekly personal development sessions held by the mentors concentrate on issues raised by students. These are used to set targets for improvement, especially in relation to any behaviour problems.
- The behaviour policy is thorough and based on the school's set of values which link well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural standards. The school has thoughtfully considered the values in relation to the revised independent school standards and emphases, and has expanded its curriculum and activities to provide even wider coverage. The school has a number of committees which are also responsible for monitoring student actions and behaviour. These include those for fairness, equality and discipline. Students are confident they can refer other students who they are unhappy with to one of the committees, depending on the type of issue for action and the required response.
- The school's clear rewards and sanctions are known well by the students who try hard to reach the behaviour goals set for them and achieve the rewards. Behaviour plans and risk assessments clearly and accurately identify how situations should be dealt with and guide staff and students accordingly.
- The school has a range of measures to support students with smoking cessation. However, students are allowed to smoke at the front of the school while supervised by staff. This does not provide a clear message that smoking is unacceptable and has a negative impact on students' health.
- Although the internal accommodation is spacious, the school does not have an external recreation area for students, as required by the independent school standards. The school is in the final stages of leasing accommodation nearby.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended, and associated requirements

- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that a written policy on compliance with relevant health and safety laws is drawn up and effectively implemented (paragraph 11).
- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable
 - pupils to play outside (paragraph 23G(1) and 23G(1)(b))

Inspection team

George Derby, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Information about this school

- Formerly known as The Collegiate Centre for Values Education for Life, the school was last inspected in June 2012 when the quality of education was judged to be good.
- It is registered to admit up to 40 students aged 11 to 17 years; at the time of this inspection there were 28 on roll, plus three who attend but remain on the roll of their local secondary school. Most students are placed at the school by Birmingham City Council's Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Service.
- The number of students has increased in the last 12 months, reflecting the demand for school places by the local authority. A high proportion of the students have been admitted in the last six to nine months.
- Students who are admitted have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; some have autism. Nearly all students have a statement of special educational needs. Students have a history of poor educational achievement and exclusion from their previous schools because of their challenging behaviour.
- The school aims to develop students' self-confidence and emotional maturity so they are able to succeed in their learning and be effective members of the school community.
- The trustees also manage another Values Academy in Nuneaton, Warwickshire. The headteacher of the Birmingham school left in December 2013 and the new head of school took over in January 2014. A school improvement consultant has been guiding the two schools since then.

School details

Unique reference number	132743
Inspection number	455636
DfE registration number	330/6101

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Number of part time pupils	1
Proprietor	Values Academy
Chair	Altine Topping
Headteacher	Hayley Cartin
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2012
Annual fees (day pupils)	£16,650 to £38,985
Telephone number	0121 523 0222
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