

# Sporting Edge Independent School

St George's Church Centre, Bridge Street West, Birmingham, B19 2YX

**Inspection dates** 24–26 February 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management	Require improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Require improvement	3
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Leaders' evaluations of teaching and of students' progress do not identify sharp enough targets for improvement.
- Curriculum plans do not identify precisely what students are expected to learn in each subject.
- Teaching requires improvement. There is not always enough challenge for the more able or support for the less-able students.
- Behaviour requires improvement. Some students do not observe the agreed rules. Too many students arrive late for school.
- Students do not know how to make their work better in some subjects because teachers do not give them clear advice.
- Reports to parents do not clearly show the extent of progress in their children's learning.
- Achievement requires improvement. The rate of progress is too variable in lessons. Too much time is wasted by lateness to school.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers have good oversight of students' safety and welfare. Safeguarding has improved and is robust.
- Teachers support students' personal development well through individual counselling, and lessons in personal and social development.
- Very good relationships with parents/carers and the police help students to learn to cooperate and conform.
- Students enjoy practical activities, particularly in art and sport. As a result, they achieve well in these subjects.
- Students' attendance is good despite their history of poor previous attendance.
- Leaders and managers have increased the range of accreditation that students can achieve.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent schools standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons to check the quality of students' learning and their behaviour.
- A wide range of students' work was examined and some students were heard reading.
- Meetings were held with students from Years 9, 10 and 11.
- Meetings were held with staff, including the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The inspector heard the views of teachers and mentors who work with the students.
- The inspector looked at a range of the school's documentation, including policies, records of monitoring, information on finance and safeguarding.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, but the inspector telephoned a sample of parents to gain their views.
- The inspector analysed the four responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Kathy Hooper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a small independent secondary school that provides full-time education for up to 19 students in the age range 14 to 16 years.
- All students had previously been, or were at risk of being, excluded from mainstream secondary or special schools or student referral units, or had recently arrived in the country. All of them have missed significant amounts of education through absence.
- There are too few students with statements of special educational needs and English as an additional language to report on their achievement separately.
- All students are from disadvantaged backgrounds, and three of them are in the care of the local authority.
- There are too few students known to be in receipt of pupil premium funding to report on their progress separately.
- Students come from a range of different ethnic communities.
- No student attends any alternative provision.
- Students join the school throughout the school year. At the time of the inspection, four students had joined in the second half of the previous term. Others had joined the school during the previous year.
- The proprietor is the headteacher. There are three teaching staff members.
- The school was last inspected in October 2011.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching and students' achievement by:
  - setting more challenging work for the more-able students and supporting those who are finding learning difficult
  - assessing students' progress in lessons and against their targets
  - giving students detailed advice to help them to improve their work.
- Improve the leadership and management by:
  - evaluating teachers' work and students' progress more thoroughly in order to set targets for improvement
  - agreeing an action plan with measurable outcomes for improving teaching and learning
  - reviewing the curriculum so that plans for each subject show precisely what it is students are expected to learn.
- Improve the behaviour of students by:
  - agreeing a robust system for rewards and sanctions
  - improving students' punctuality.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management **require improvement**

- The plans for improving the work of the school are not firmly based on regular and detailed checks on students' progress and the impact of teachers' work.
- The curriculum provides an adequate range of experiences. The school appropriately promotes equality of opportunity for students who, typically, have had negative experiences of education by helping them to reconnect with education. Daily review meetings ensure good oversight of each student's behaviour and inform lesson planning for the next day. All students are equally valued and principles of respect are addressed well.
- Some of the schemes of work for different subjects clearly identify expectations in each subject but they do not set out clearly enough the knowledge, skills and understanding to be taught. This limits the precision in teachers' planning. There is not always enough challenge in lessons for the more able or support for those who are experiencing difficulties with their learning.
- Assessments of students' progress in some subjects such as art are clear and tailored to individual learning needs. However, in others, especially English and mathematics, they are not sufficiently specific to provide parents with a clear picture of what their children have learned. This limits the clarity with which targets can be set for students' progress and the extent to which parents might support their children at home.
- The management of students' behaviour, through rewards and sanctions, is not consistently firm. Students' behaviour is reviewed well and regularly, but poor punctuality reduces the amount of time available to extend and reinforce students' literacy and numeracy skills.
- There are regular opportunities to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through visits and lessons in personal and social development. There are adequate opportunities to discuss local issues, such as knife crime and terrorism. British values of respect and tolerance are promoted appropriately through all day-to-day activities and, for the most part, there are good relationships with staff and between students.
- There are good relationships with parents and carers. Daily contact between them and the school is the norm. Oversight of students' safety and well-being is good. The quality of information to parents is adequate. Good relationships with the local police and local vicar help students to work with different members of the local community.
- In consultation with their parents and carers, students are well prepared for the next stage of their education. All students go on to further education, training or employment. They are prepared appropriately for life in modern Britain.
- Safeguarding is robust and meets statutory requirements. Staff training is up to date. Procedures for handling complaints are appropriate. The school premises are adequate. The facilities are safe. They are checked regularly and well maintained.
- **The governance of the school:**

The proprietor of the school is the headteacher, who has close oversight of the work of the school. All the independent school standards are met. The school is aware of its areas for development and is in the process of preparing an action plan for improvement. There are no arrangements in place to provide an independent assessment of the work of the school.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils****require improvement****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Teachers invest considerable energy in encouraging students to re-engage with learning. Parents remark on the school's success in this regard. However, students' behaviour has been affected by the poor attitudes of some students. Many of the students have a history of failure and rejection and are not motivated by lessons designed to develop their basic skills.
- The system of rewards and sanctions is not sufficiently robust to secure high levels of respect from students at all times during the school day. Not all students have behaviour plans that are used daily to help them to modify their challenging behaviour.
- Students' attendance is very good but they arrive very late for school on too many occasions. Students dress appropriately for school and some are beginning to bring their own writing equipment and complete homework. They enjoy warm, respectful and supportive relationships with staff.
- Most students want to learn and, once engaged with relevant activities, persevere extremely well, especially in art and sport. They learn to cooperate; for example, taking turns in table tennis. They understand rules as they apply to games.
- Students' behaviour out of school on school trips and in the minibus is good. Those students who have been at the school for the longest time become more confident. Parents and carers remark on their greater engagement in learning than was the case previously.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep students safe has improved and is good. Students feel safe in school, and parents and carers have confidence in the school's ability to keep their children safe within school and on visits.
- Arrangements for the safe recruitment of staff are good. Good attention is given to the training of staff in safeguarding, first aid and fire safety.
- The school's programme of personal and social education regularly addresses bullying, including cyber-bullying. There are regular opportunities to discuss a wide range of health issues, including those related to sex, nutrition and the impact of crime.
- Students say there is no bullying, but the aggressive behaviour of a few of the students is, on occasions, oppressive for other students. Issues are picked up and addressed well through daily discussions with students.
- A good range of visits and visitors promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, there are visits to the seaside, and to the Peak District and art galleries, as well as assemblies led by the vicar. There is strong emphasis on helping students to appreciate right and wrong, and this is reinforced through regular work with the police.

**The quality of teaching****requires improvement**

- Teaching is based on examination requirements and appropriate textbooks. As a result, students achieve a range of certificated awards.
- In those lessons where teaching does not stimulate and interest students – for example, in English – the pace of students' progress is slow and they are reluctant to engage with the work. On occasions, students are not fluent when using specialist vocabulary, particularly where their first language is not English.
- Assessments of students' learning are not sufficiently detailed and robust to provide a firm basis for

planning lessons in English and mathematics. This means that work is sometimes too hard and sometimes too easy. Students are not always appropriately challenged or supported.

- Although teachers regularly mark students' work, they do not always explain what students need to do to improve.
- Teaching in art and sport is good and students learn well in these subjects. The work in art is individually prepared and students have full feedback that helps them to make their work better. They produce good-quality work, such as that in the style of Modigliani, using a range of different media and materials. Students engage very well in sporting activities.
- Students' levels of perseverance are high, particularly in physical education, sport and in art. The more-able students engage well in mathematics lessons where they are set work that is challenging; for example, when learning how to solve equations in algebra. There is good one-to-one support for individual students.
- Some valuable links in understanding are made through visits out of school. The leisure and tourism course provides good opportunities for students to understand social issues. Physical education is used to help students to understand aspects of biology. In a business and communications studies lesson, a visit to McDonalds provided a powerful context within which students were able to identify the different roles and responsibilities of personnel within a work context.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students' achievement requires improvement. The majority of students have attended for too short a time for secure judgements to be made about their progress over time. However, the extent of their progress within individual lessons is too variable.
- Students' achievement is limited by teaching that does too little to help them to see the benefits for them of learning. It is further restricted where activities that are planned are too easy or too difficult. Poor punctuality reduces the amount of time available for learning, particularly in English and mathematics. As a result, the extent of their progress in developing basic skills is restricted.
- Students achieve a range of accredited units of work and courses. Some more-able students achieve GCSEs in English, mathematics, art and physical education. Externally accredited units of work are used on entry to the school to assess students. Most of the students collect an increasing number of more advanced units during their time at the school.
- Students are fluent readers, although they do not routinely read books. Shortly after they arrived, Key Stage 4 students who read *The Christmas Carol* before Christmas with their teacher who acknowledged that this was the first book they had read.
- Students' progress is best when they have learned to control their challenging behaviour. Some students make good strides in their learning once they accept the need to cooperate.
- Students are well prepared for the next stage in their education. No student is out of education, employment or training. Past students often return to inspire current students.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134403
<b>Inspection number</b>	454269
<b>DfE registration number</b>	3306109

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Independent
<b>School status</b>	Secondary School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	7
<b>Proprietor</b>	Stephen McCullough
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen McCullough
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 October 2011
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£30,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 333 7325
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