

Values Academy

15 Key Hill, Hockley, Birmingham B18 5PB

Inspection dates 4–6 May 2016

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.
- The school provides strong pastoral support to pupils and their families to reduce pupils' barriers to learning and improve their behaviour.
- Pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects. Many have had disrupted schooling, but most find stability at this school and start to progress well. The positive and supportive relationship provided by teachers and mentors does much to help pupils get back on track.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge effectively to deliver interesting lessons, which build well on pupils' needs.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly. The school's values align strongly with British values, which are actively promoted across the curriculum.
- Pupils' behaviour improves at a good rate. They learn to become more responsible and mature adults through taking an active role in committees and dealing with issues such as fairness, equal opportunities and health and safety.
- Pupils make an effective contribution to the school community. Weekly community meetings chaired by pupils deal with concerns and celebrate achievements enthusiastically.
- The school works closely with a range of other agencies to promote pupils' welfare and well-being effectively.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that all independent standards are met and that safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe and develop their self-confidence and self-esteem well.
- Trustees have stepped up their monitoring role so that they check the work of the school closely, provide greater challenge and hold the school to account more effectively. The school continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Assessment and analysis of pupils' outcomes does not measure pupils' small steps of progress, the impact of additional funding, and how different groups of pupils progress, or reflect the latest changes to the national curriculum.
- Staff are sometimes over-eager to help pupils and deny them opportunities to develop their independence.
- For a small number of pupils attendance is too low and fixed-term exclusions are too high.
- Information technology is not used enough to support pupils' learning.
- Monitoring of pupils' work has not been rigorous enough to promote consistently good or better practice.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - making better use of information technology to support pupils' learning
 - ensuring pupils' work is monitored more closely by senior leaders
 - maximising opportunities to encourage the independence of pupils.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing assessment arrangements which reflect the changes to the national curriculum
 - measuring the rate of progress for different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls and those pupils who receive additional funding, to ensure they make good or better progress
 - recording systematically small steps of progress for all pupils.

- Improve pupils' attendance and reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The trustees and school leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The school has maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection, despite changes to some key staff. An ethos of respect and tolerance promotes pupils' good behaviour. When pupils join the school they find stability and start to flourish academically. Leaders and staff are highly committed to the well-being and academic success of pupils.
- The curriculum contributes effectively to pupils becoming more responsible citizens and they are offered therapeutic support alongside the academic curriculum. Staff have expertise in delivering sessions such as anger management and self-esteem programmes. Ongoing training ensures these skills stay up to date and relevant. There is a strong emphasis on conflict resolution and restorative justice. This is very effective in teaching pupils self-control and self-regulation.
- The school has strong pastoral systems in place to support pupils. They receive weekly personal development sessions to help them address personal issues and reduce barriers to their learning.
- Leaders ensure that links with parents and other agencies are strong to ensure pupils get the help and support they need. Parents have positive views of this support. One parent commented, 'My son was out of school for 20 months due to his behavioural problems. Values Academy has helped turn my son around to the point he sat a GCSE a year early. I cannot praise this school enough.'
- Pupils receive impartial careers education guidance to help them prepare for their next steps. They are supported with college applications and most pupils go on to some form of training or employment.
- Middle leaders have a good overview of their areas of responsibility and identify strengths and areas for development. They know what needs to be done to raise pupils' attainment and take appropriate action to do so.
- The school's self-evaluation is an honest appraisal of the strengths of the school and reflects what senior leaders and managers need to focus on to improve further. Trustees have been fully involved in this process.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They understand the school values, which closely match the British values of tolerance, respect for the law and democracy. These are taught through subjects such as religious education, and personal, social and health education.
- Individual work with mentors reinforces positive values and encourages pupils to reflect on and discuss issues. In addition, pupils play an active role in the school's equal opportunities committee. These opportunities contribute well to pupils' strong understanding of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and help to promote good relationships.
- The school has not yet developed its own assessment arrangements following changes to assessment in the national curriculum. Leaders are not clear about the impact of pupil premium funding on some pupils' progress because they do not routinely analyse the progress made by different groups of pupils. The school lacks ways of measuring small steps of progress for those whose progress appears to have plateaued. Information about behaviour is recorded at an individual level but not at whole-school level and consequently trends are not identified.
- The monitoring of pupils' work in books is not rigorous enough and this has led to some inconsistencies in practice and expectations of standards of work, so that the best practice is not shared across all subjects widely enough.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Trustees have stepped up their role so they are now more rigorous in their monitoring of the work of the school. They have developed measures to help them check more easily how effective the school is. Trustees visit the school on a regular basis and have first-hand knowledge of the school through visits to lessons. They are becoming increasingly effective and have been appropriately involved in the school's self-evaluation process. They have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. They have employed the services of a school improvement partner to bring about greater challenge and rigour.
 - A new safeguarding trustee has recently been appointed and is due to attend relevant training imminently. Trustees have ensured the school meets all of the independent school regulations and that pupils are safe and protected and benefit from good teaching.
 - Trustees have ensured that the performance of staff is evaluated and they have access to appropriate training to help them be more effective in their work. Currently, there is no direct link between salary progression and performance.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school works closely with parents, and other agencies, to ensure pupils are safe and supported. There is thorough follow-up of child protection concerns and records are detailed. Staff receive appropriate levels of training to ensure that they are able to identify pupils who are at risk of harm, including those vulnerable to the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- Teaching is lively and motivates pupils well. Clear objectives are shared with pupils at the start of lessons and pupils work towards these diligently and with sustained concentration. Pupils engage positively in lessons and most are confident to contribute to discussions and offer their views, particularly in lessons that focus on values.
- Teachers and mentors encourage pupils to have positive attitudes to learning. They have high expectations based on the positive relationships they have with pupils. Pupils told the inspector that they appreciate the close support that staff provide and feel they make improvements in their learning as a result. Teaching allows pupils to gain qualifications which boost their confidence and self-belief.
- Teachers adjust the level of challenge within lessons to suit different ability levels. Skilful questioning is used well to test and extend pupils' thinking. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of their pupils and know them well. Occasionally, opportunities for pupils' independence are denied, as mentors do too much for pupils.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is secure, enabling pupils to make good progress from their starting points. Pupils also receive additional help in these basic skills in dedicated support sessions with mentors.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. In mathematics, for example, this has resulted in rapid improvements in pupils' mathematical progress.
- Pupils are provided with regular reading opportunities in tutorials to encourage them to take pleasure from reading as a leisure activity. As a result, pupils read widely and often. They cover a range of genres, from factual texts to fictional novels.
- Learning happens successfully because the behaviour management of pupils is effective. It is based on mutually respectful, positive and supportive relationships. Very occasionally, expectations of pupils are not high enough. For example, some pupils are allowed to sit with their coats on in lessons and so do not develop good work habits.
- Information and communication technology is not used well enough to support pupils' learning, for example to enable them to research facts or as an alternative to writing and recording their work by hand.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school has very clear values of courage, honesty, compassion and integrity, which it promotes strongly, and over time pupils subscribe to these values.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, through the curriculum and through effective support and coaching from mentors.
- British values are actively taught. For example, their understanding of democracy is enhanced through the weekly community meetings, chaired by pupils. Pupils are encouraged to debate and to reason in order to resolve conflicts and to deal effectively with concerns. In these meetings, pupils make decisions on some aspects of the running of the school and they make a strong contribution to the school community. Pupils have opportunities to visit places of interest such as museums and art galleries in Birmingham.
- Pupils develop respect and their understanding of social and moral development is enhanced by their involvement in administering restorative justice to other pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Many pupils achieve substantial improvements in their behaviour as a result of the work of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is mostly good. Lessons are usually calm and pupils develop positive attitudes to learning.

- Pupils say they feel safe and bullying and racist incidents are not common. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- Pupils spoken to said how much they enjoy school, and for many this is reflected in their improved attendance. They recognise that their behaviour and attendance have improved substantially. However, overall attendance is below average as a result of the poor attendance of a small number of pupils. This negatively affects the progress they make. The school is aware that this is an area for further improvement.
- Physical interventions are rare. Exclusion is used appropriately as a last resort; however, for a small number of pupils the relatively high rate of fixed-term exclusions is not reducing over time.
- Some pupils are late to the first lesson in the morning. This is because some of those who arrive by taxi are often late due to factors beyond the control of the school. There has been some improvement in this area over the last 12 months.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- The vast majority of pupils enter the school with below-average levels of attainment, due to either their specific learning difficulties or poor attendance at their previous educational establishments. However, pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils achieve entry-level certificates and GCSE grades mainly at foundation level, although some of the most able pupils achieve grade C and above in core subjects. In science currently, pupils are studying biology GCSE courses.
- The majority of pupils achieve at least one qualification and often up to three. Tracking information, pupils' work in books and inspection findings support the view that pupils make good progress overall in a range of subjects. Pupils enjoy practical subjects such as physical educational, art and food technology and achieve well in these areas.
- The majority of pupils move on to destinations such as further education colleges or other local providers, and are well prepared to do so.
- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics, because work is carefully matched to their levels and challenges them appropriately. In English, pupils write for a range of different purposes. The most able pupils write extended pieces of work and identify how themes and characters are explored in novels such as *Of Mice and Men*.
- The pupil premium funding has been used appropriately to provide additional support for individual pupils. The school has clear evidence that those pupils who are looked after by the local authority make good progress. However, for other pupils who receive this funding, the school does not have clear enough measures to evaluate how successful interventions have been in helping them to make up lost ground.

School details

Unique reference number	132743
Inspection number	10008601
DfE registration number	330/6101

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.

Type of school	Social, emotional and mental health needs
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Values Academy Limited
Chair	Simon Livings
Headteacher	Hayley Cartin
Annual fees (day pupils)	Approximately £24,525
Telephone number	0121 5230 222
Website	www.valuesacademy.org.uk
Email address	estelle.dimelor@valuesacademy.org.uk
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 June 2012

Information about this school

- Formerly known as The Collegiate Centre for Values Education for Life, the school had its last standard inspection in June 2012 when the quality of education was judged to be good.
- It is registered to admit up to 35 pupils, aged 11 to 17 years; at the time of this inspection there were 28 pupils on roll. There were no sixth form learners on roll at the time of the inspection. Most pupils are placed at the school by Birmingham City Council's Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Service.
- Pupils who are admitted have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; some have autism. Nearly all pupils have an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs. Pupils have a history of poor educational achievement and exclusion, or are at risk of exclusion from their previous schools because of their challenging behaviour.
- The trustees also manage another Values Academy in Nuneaton, Warwickshire. The headteacher of the Birmingham school left in March and an acting head of school is currently in place.
- An emergency inspection took place in December 2014, following concerns raised from a pupil response during the Ofsted 'point in time survey'. Although the concerns were mostly unfounded, two regulations were unmet. These related to students' health promotion and their smoking at the school and also the lack of an external recreation area for pupils to play. An action plan was produced and evaluated in February 2015; the plan was judged to be acceptable.

- The school underwent a successful material change visit in March 2015, following relocation to new premises.
- Ten pupils are eligible for the pupil premium funding, some of whom are looked after by the local authority. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or those pupils who are looked after by the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed nine parts of lessons, most of which were joint observations with the school's improvement partner.
- Pupils' work, surveys, annual reports and other records were scrutinised.
- The school's documentation was examined, including planning for subjects, records of pupils' progress and information relating to the welfare and safeguarding of pupils. The inspector checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- The views of pupils were sought through individual discussions and the school's weekly community meeting.
- There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire Parent View, but the inspector took into account other comments made by parents in response to the survey.

Inspection team

Frank Price, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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