

# Values Academy

15 Key Hill, Hockley, Birmingham, West Midlands B18 5PB

## Inspection dates

21–23 May 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leadership is focused and determined. The work of leaders has a positive impact on all aspects of the school.
- Leaders have created a values-based culture where pupils are able to thrive. As a result, the vast majority of pupils display positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Personal development is a key strength of the school. Staff work effectively with pupils to develop their social skills and emotional resilience. Relationships between pupils and their peers are positive.
- Leaders create many opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. As a result, pupils understand and respect differences.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils are able to access a range of academic and vocational opportunities. They develop core skills and an understanding of the world. Pupils are well prepared for the future.
- The proprietor has ensured that all independent school standards are met.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are highly vigilant. They act quickly on areas of concern. Pupils are taught how to keep safe. Pupils say they feel safe.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils understand what is expected of them. Pupils say their behaviour has improved since joining the school.
- Leaders work well with parents and external agencies to promote good attendance. For a small number of pupils, attendance is low. This is, however, an improvement when compared to their attendance at previous settings.
- The majority of teachers use prior information to plan learning that meets pupils' needs. Teachers use secure subject knowledge to engage and motivate pupils. As the result of this good teaching most pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- On rare occasions, teaching lacks challenge for the most able pupils. This limits the progress these pupils are able to make

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

## Full report

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

- Further develop the quality of teaching by:
  - making sure that all teachers take into account pupils' prior learning to plan and deliver teaching that is sufficiently challenging for the most able.
- Continue to improve school attendance by:
  - engaging with parents and pupils to overcome barriers to poor attendance
  - working with external agencies to access appropriate support for pupils who are persistently absent.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders and the proprietor have made sure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders have established a culture where common values of respect and tolerance are shared by all members of the school community. Staff know their pupils well. They focus on the individual child and work collaboratively to meet their personal needs. As a result, pupils who have often become disengaged from learning settle quickly into a caring environment.
- Leaders are aspirational and want the best for all pupils. Leaders make appropriate adaptations to the learning environment to promote learning. Pupils are well supported by skilled staff who understand their individual needs. The majority of pupils work hard and are proud of their achievements.
- Processes for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are rigorous. As a result, leaders have an accurate view of the strengths of teaching. They are quick to challenge underperformance to make sure pupils get the best possible experiences.
- The school development plan identifies appropriate areas for improvement. Targets are precise and linked to teachers' performance targets. Staff who completed Ofsted's staff survey say they feel supported by leaders and value their professional development.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is well matched to meet the needs of pupils. Careful consideration has been given to the skills pupils need to prepare them for the future. Pupils are able to achieve GCSEs or equivalent qualifications in English, mathematics, science, art and humanities. They can also access a range of vocational opportunities including food technology and information communication technology (ICT). Pupils are well prepared for the next phases of their education.
- A small number of post-16 pupils remain at the school to pursue additional qualifications. These students are able to access appropriate courses as well as consolidate their previous learning.
- Pupils arrive at the school with limited social and cultural experiences. Leaders enhance the curriculum with rich, purposeful, meaningful opportunities. Pupils enjoy regular visits to museums and places of worship. In art, pupils explore aspects of war and acts of remembrance. Pupils are heavily involved in their school community.
- Parents speak highly of the school. They receive regular progress reports and say they are pleased with how well their children are doing. Parents say they would recommend the school to others.

### Governance

- The school's performance is overseen by a board of trustees. The board is supported by the chief executive officer. The work of the school is also supported by a school improvement partner. The board provides leaders with appropriate support and challenge. As a result, the arrangements for governance are effective.
- Trustees have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school. They are well

informed through comprehensive reports from school leaders. They visit the school regularly to help ensure that their assessment of the school is accurate.

- Meetings are frequent and focus on key aspects of school development including teaching and learning and curriculum development. Trustees place high emphasis on attendance and engagement of pupils and regularly scrutinise these areas.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding policy is comprehensive and takes into account current guidance from the Secretary of State. The policy clearly outlines processes to follow in the event of concerns about a child. The policy is published on the school's website. Paper copies are also made available upon request.
- The designated safeguarding lead and deputy are appropriately trained and fully aware of their responsibilities. They maintain detailed records and liaise with external agencies when appropriate. Nothing is left to chance when it comes to the safety of children.
- Staff have also completed appropriate training. They know how to recognise signs of abuse and neglect. Staff know about the risks of radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. They have a good understanding of the risks within the local area.
- The curriculum teaches pupils about how to keep safe. Pupils who spoke with the inspector knew about online safety, gangs, stranger danger and substance misuse.
- Leaders have carried out appropriate checks on all adults who work at the school. The single central register meets requirements.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers help to reignite pupils' interest in learning. They take time to find out about pupils' interests and hobbies. They use this information to plan engaging lessons. Pupils who met with the inspector said that teachers make learning fun.
- Teachers have high expectations for all of their pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. There are well-established routines. Pupils are expected to demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and work hard. As a result, the majority of pupils are ready to learn.
- The teaching of English is effective. Pupils often arrive as reluctant writers. Teachers engage pupils well in topics that interest them including writing about holiday destinations and the solving of crimes. Over time, pupils learn to write for a variety of purposes and their written work improves in depth and fluency. They develop rich vocabulary and use grammatical features correctly.
- Pupils are encouraged to read aloud. Most pupils do this with a degree of fluency and expression. Teachers regularly question pupils' understanding of what they have read. Work in pupils' books shows that their comprehension skills improve over time.
- In mathematics pupils are able to recall previous learning well. Pupils use their prior learning to solve more complex problems. The majority of pupils are able to apply mathematical rules to more challenging tasks. Where pupils struggle to grasp this,

teachers revisit rules and provide concrete examples to secure understanding.

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. In science, pupils enjoy learning about the respiratory system. Teaching evokes their curiosity; they ask relevant questions because they are keen to learn more. For example, this results in secure scientific understanding of the effects of exercise on the human body.
- The majority of teachers use information about the individual needs of their pupils well. They make adaptations to learning and adjust tasks to make sure pupils are able to access learning. Most use strong questioning to build on what pupils already know and can do. On rare occasions, a few more able pupils are not provided with strong enough challenge. This limits the progress they make.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils arrive with limited life experiences. This impacts on their peer relationships and social interactions. The pastoral support programme is personalised to all pupils. It takes into account their areas of difficulty. Staff work with pupils, one to one and in small groups, to support pupils with anger management, managing emotions and coping with bereavement. This work is supported by a psychodynamic therapist. The school's information shows that pupils access this support frequently and benefit from sessions that result in them being better able to cope with expressing themselves.
- A number of committees exist that enable pupils to express their opinions and wishes. They take these roles seriously and show respect for the opinions of others. These wider experiences are new and help to develop pupils spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. As a result, pupils learn to respect and value differences.
- Pupils express positive views about their school. They say that the school is different to other schools as teachers know you and have time for you. Pupils who met with the inspector said they always had someone to talk to if they needed help.
- The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum tackles challenging themes. Pupils learn about gun and knife crime, substance misuse and mental health. They also learn about appropriate relationships and how to forge and maintain friendships. Pupils told the inspector that school has taught them how to keep themselves safe. Pupils say that school helps them to resolve their differences and make friends.
- The provision for careers education is good. Pupils access a variety of college visits. They participate well in preparation for working life sessions. The curriculum is enhanced with visiting speakers, including a recent careers visit from the Armed Forces. The majority of pupils have a clear idea of their chosen career path. They say school helps them with their career choices.
- Leaders value the contribution of their pupils. They act on feedback from pupils and make changes where appropriate. Pupils are represented on the health and safety committee. They help to make sure the building and surrounding areas are safe and kept tidy. Pupils are fully involved in their school community. There is a strong sense of ownership.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- At the point of the last inspection fixed-term exclusions were high. Leaders and the trustees changed the culture around behaviour and exclusions. Highly skilled staff diffuse incidents and help pupils to make appropriate choices. Consequently, the number of fixed-term exclusions has significantly decreased.
- There are high expectations for positive behaviour. The behaviour policy is based on work, effort, behaviour and attitude. The policy is applied consistently throughout the school. It is clear and understood by all pupils. As a result, pupils regularly display positive attitudes to their learning. They are able to reflect on where they need to improve and take appropriate action.
- Staff place high emphasis on restorative justice and 'putting things right'. As a result, pupils learn from their experiences and develop the skills to manage situations more appropriately.
- Many pupils arrive at the school having been permanently excluded from a number of previous settings. A high number of pupils have missed long periods of learning before joining the school. The school is warm and welcoming. As a result, the majority of pupils settle into the routines of school quickly.
- Leaders reported no cases of bullying. Pupils also confirmed that this was the case. They know about different types of bullying. Pupils who met with the inspector said they were confident that staff would resolve any issues should they occur.
- Attendance for a small number of pupils is low. Leaders work hard to engage parents and pupils and focus on attendance improvement. The school follows up absence and engages with the local authority and external agencies where appropriate. The majority of pupils' attendance has improved from their previous setting.

## Outcomes for pupils

### Good

- Pupils can arrive at the school at any point during the academic year. For some, this can be as late as Year 11. Many have experienced disruption to their learning. Consequently, they have significant gaps in their learning. Their starting points are often lower than pupils of a similar age.
- All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The special educational needs coordinator uses available information to plan appropriate learning. Teachers reshape tasks and regularly monitor pupils' progress. Highly skilled teaching assistants use a range of strategies to support learning through the school's 'precision teaching' programme. The impact of this work is positive. Pupils make strong progress towards the outcomes defined in their education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The majority of pupils make good progress across the curriculum. They make gains in their learning. This is particularly evident in core subjects where pupils develop secure skills over time.
- A high proportion of pupils arrive as reluctant readers. Teachers carefully introduce texts based on pupils' interests. They encourage reading aloud and guided reading across the curriculum. Most pupils access the small library within the school. Although assessment

systems for reading are newly established, the school's information shows that pupils are developing comprehension skills and accessing more age-related materials.

- In 2018 the vast majority of pupils who left at the end Year 11 made good progress from their starting points. Pupils achieved GCSEs in English and mathematics as well as qualifications in vocational subjects including art. These pupils moved on to positive destinations. Pupils are engaging well in a range of courses at local colleges including apprenticeships.
- Pupils make strong social and emotional progress. They engage well in reflective sessions that equip them with the skills to solve problems. As a result, their ability to manage disagreements and resolve conflicts improves over time.

## School details

Unique reference number	132743
DfE registration number	330/6101
Inspection number	10092449

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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	3
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Values Academy Limited
Chair	Simon Livings
Headteacher	Caroline Swift
Annual fees (day pupils)	£25,605
Telephone number	0121 523 0222
Website	<a href="http://www.valuesacademy.org.uk">www.valuesacademy.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:caroline.swift@valuesacademy.org.uk">caroline.swift@valuesacademy.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	4–6 May 2016

## Information about this school

- Values Academy is an independent day school in Hockley, Birmingham. The school offers places for pupils ages 11 to 18 with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is registered for 35 pupils. There are currently 20 pupils on the school roll. Pupils all have an EHC plan. Pupils have range of needs including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Asperger syndrome and mental health needs.

- Pupils are referred from a number of local authorities including Birmingham, Sandwell, Coventry and Solihull. Prior to joining the school, a high proportion of pupils have been permanently excluded from previous settings. Many pupils have not attended school for extended periods of time.
- The school offers places to post-16 students; however, at the point of inspection the number of post-16 students was extremely low. In the interest of confidentiality, information about personal development and behaviour and outcomes for post-16 students has not been reported.
- The school opened in 2009 and moved to its current premises in 2015. The school is housed in a former jewellery factory. The school has an appropriate number of classrooms and an information communication technology suite, a small library, and a small outdoor space.
- The school does not make use of alternative providers. Pupils access educational visits to support their learning.
- Pupils participate in physical education at a nearby gym. They also access local playing fields.
- The school was last inspected in May 2016 when its overall effectiveness was judged to be good. A new principal was appointed in 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with notice of one day.
- The inspector held meetings with school leaders, the chief executive officer and the school's improvement partner. A telephone discussion was held with an education trustee. The inspector also met with a group of pupils.
- The inspector toured the premises accompanied by the business manager.
- Learning, across all year groups in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, life skills, humanities and preparation for working life, was observed jointly with school leaders. Work in pupils' books was also reviewed.
- The inspector examined a number of key policies including those for safeguarding, behaviour, admissions, complaints and the curriculum. Documentation relating to health and safety was also scrutinised. The inspector also reviewed the school's single central register.
- The responses to Ofsted's survey for parents were considered. The inspector also reviewed parental surveys carried out by the school.
- The inspector also took into account 17 responses to the staff survey, as well as 11 responses to the pupil survey.

## Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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