

# Sporting Edge Independent School

Independent school standard inspection report

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## **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## **Information about the school**

Sporting Edge is an independent secondary day school for students aged 14 to 16 years. The school offers an alternative to mainstream education for students who have been excluded from, or are at risk of being excluded from, maintained provision. On occasion, the school admits students who are newly arrived into the United Kingdom. The school aims, 'through true sporting ethics to ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to develop personally, achieve academically, progress into further education, employment or training, with skills and experiences that will equip them to be successful and contributing adults.' Most students attend the school on a short term flexible basis depending on the requirements of the placing authorities. Some students remain at the school for longer periods. At the time of the inspection, most students were newly admitted to the school. Four students have a statement of special educational needs for emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Sporting Edge is situated in Newtown, near Birmingham city centre. It opened in September 2005 and is registered for 30 students. There are currently five part-time and 11 full-time students on roll. The school was last inspected in July 2008.

## **Evaluation of the school**

Sporting Edge provides a satisfactory quality of education for its students. It is successful in meeting its stated aims and re-engaging students in their learning. The school has acted well on the recommendations of the last report and now meets all of the requirements for registration. The quality of the curriculum, teaching and assessment are satisfactory, and as a result, the progress made by students is satisfactory. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and their behaviour is good. The welfare, health and safety of the students are satisfactory and safeguarding requirements are met.

## **Quality of education**

The quality of education is satisfactory and students make satisfactory progress in their learning. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The school has successfully introduced a GCSE course in art and design

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

and this is very popular with students. In addition, students follow GCSE courses in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), leisure and tourism, physical education and business and communication systems. Students are also given the opportunity to gain a sports and fitness qualification through the Award Scheme and Development Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Although the school does not have an outside play area, provision for physical education is good as students use the facilities of a local sports hall and weights training room daily. The curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) makes a positive contribution to students' personal development and social skills. The school complements the curriculum with a satisfactory range of off-site visits, including recent visits to Birmingham science museum and Stratford-upon-Avon. Schemes of work have due regard to the examination board requirements, but vary in quality. The scheme of work for art and design is particularly well planned to meet the individual needs of each student. Each unit of work is designed to capture students' interests and inspire them. As a result, students make good progress in art and design and most achieve grade C or above at GCSE. Students receive regular careers guidance from Connexions and most undertake successful work placements during Years 10 or 11. Most students successfully achieve a range of GCSE qualifications and this enables them to secure places at local colleges of further education to study post-16.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Most students join the school with knowledge and skills at the expected level for their age. Work seen in students' files and discussions with them, indicate that they are making satisfactory progress in lessons and over a period of time. Students achieve a range of GCSE grades in English and mathematics, representing satisfactory progress from their individual starting points. In art and design, students make good progress due to the individually tailored lesson plans. Students enjoy physical education lessons and make good progress in learning a range of sporting skills. In one physical education lesson observed, students were individually challenged to improve their basketball skills, to work as a team and to learn new skills. As a result, they made good progress in their learning. However, this good progress is not always reflected in students' physical education GCSE results. Tasks set in most lessons are generally the same for all students. However, students are able to make satisfactory progress as a result of the high levels of support they receive. Class sizes are small and teachers know their students very well. Behaviour in lessons is well-managed and teachers use their knowledge of the students to dissipate any potential issues that may arise. The learning environment is calm and positive and relationships are friendly. The school is aware that there is sometimes an over-reliance on worksheets and this limits opportunities for students to develop as independent learners. In some lessons, opportunities are missed to develop independent working skills or engaging students' interests through well chosen real-life examples. The school has developed a suitable assessment framework that includes a baseline assessment when students join the school and regular subject assessments. Students are given helpful examination advice, particularly in art and design, and physical education. Students' work is generally marked on a regular basis with positive comments which builds their confidence and self-esteem. Students with a statement of special

educational needs or those who are looked after receive appropriate support and make similar progress to their peers.q

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is satisfactory. Teachers provide good role models and this has a positive impact on students' moral and social development. The curriculum, particularly in art and design, makes a valuable contribution to students' spiritual and cultural development. Students report that they enjoy school. This is clearly demonstrated in their attendance which is good, given that many students have come from situations where their attendance was poor or non-existent. Behaviour in lessons is generally good and attitudes to learning are positive. Students respond well to instructions from staff and have a clear sense of right and wrong.

Opportunities for students to contribute to the school community or develop a sense of responsibility are limited. The school council is in the process of being re-established and students do not hold posts of responsibility within the school. However, students regularly take part in fundraising for local and national charities, such as the Macmillan coffee morning. Students report that they would appreciate more opportunities to influence the wider work of the school. Most students achieve satisfactorily and are well-prepared for the next steps in their education, training or employment. Students learn about democracy, being a good citizen and the role of public organisations in England through PSHE lessons. These lessons are enhanced by visits from local public services such as the West Midlands Fire Service and police. Students receive helpful advice and guidance on personal safety and on pertinent issues such as the consequences of gun and knife crime or car theft. Students come from a wide range of different cultures and faiths. The school has generated a culture of racial harmony by valuing the cultural heritage of all the students. Students' art work reflects a wide range of cultural influences and an appreciation of cultures and beliefs different to their own.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The welfare, health and safety of the students are satisfactory. Students are very well supervised in school and when they go out into the local community. As a result, students report that they feel safe and bullying is very rare. The designated person for child protection is currently updating her training and all staff have undertaken child protection basic awareness training. The school leases part of a church building and as such, shares the responsibility for routine checks of fire systems and checks on electrical equipment. These checks are completed appropriately. Students are taught to be aware of potential hazards and how to be safe in lessons, particularly practical lessons such as physical education. There are effective procedures in place for first aid and staff are appropriately trained. Risk assessments for off-site visits are up-to-date and staff follow appropriate procedures. Staff recruitment procedures follow guidelines and all staff have undergone enhanced checks with the Criminal

Records Bureau (CRB) to confirm their suitability to work with children and young people. The school's day-to-day practices and actions ensure that students are kept safe and well cared for. However, a number of policies have not been updated recently and therefore do not always reflect the school's current, appropriate practice. Students have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and the school provides healthy food at break times and lunchtime. Students report that they particularly look forward to a tasty cooked lunch. The school's three-year accessibility plan meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The school fully complies with the regulations in respect of the checks it makes on prospective employees with regard to their identity and suitability to work with children and young people.

### **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The school is located in part of a modern church building. The premises have been refurbished to provide appropriate internal teaching areas. In addition, there is a small ICT suite, art room and kitchen facilities. Students are kept safe through carefully regulated access to the building. The classroom areas benefit from natural light and are spacious given the number of students currently on roll. The outside areas are limited and lack seating or space for recreation. However, the school makes daily use of a range of sporting facilities at St George's Community Hub, a short walk from the school.

### **Provision of information**

The school has established positive links with parents, Birmingham Pupil Connect service, outside agencies and students' previous schools. Parents and carers are kept informed about their child's progress through regular written reports and telephone contact. The end of year reports are a helpful summary of each student's progress and attainment in key areas of learning and personal development.

### **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school has a fair complaints procedure which meets the requirements.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Ensure that curriculum planning and schemes of work are all completed to a good standard.
- Ensure that activities provided for students in lessons are closely matched to their individual abilities, and where possible, related to real-life experiences.

## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development			✓	
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Day School		
<b>Date school opened</b>	September 2005		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–16 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 9	Girls: 2	Total: 11
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 4	Girls: 1	Total: 5
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 4	Girls: 0	Total: 4
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£9750		
<b>Address of school</b>	St George's Church Centre, Bridge Street West, Birmingham, B19 2YX		
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 3337325		
<b>Email address</b>	sporting_edge2006@yahoo.co.uk		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen McCullough		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Stephen McCullough		

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



20 October 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Sporting Edge Independent School, Birmingham, B19 2YX**

Thank you for your help and comments throughout the inspection. I found them very useful. I was impressed by your good behaviour and courtesy to visitors. You go to a satisfactory school which has improved since the last inspection. I could see that you enjoyed most of your lessons, particularly art and design and physical education. These subjects are well taught and as a result you make good progress in these areas. I have asked the school to make sure that planning for all subjects is equally good so that you can make good progress in all your lessons. Your teachers generally make lessons interesting, but I have asked them to make sure that your lessons meet your individual needs and are related to real-life experiences wherever possible.

Thank you for completing the student questionnaire. You told me that most of you enjoy coming to school and you feel safe and well cared for by the staff. You also said that you would like to be more involved in making decisions about the school. I have passed this information on to your deputy headteacher. I was pleased to see that most of you attend school regularly and that you are well-prepared for your next steps in Post-16 education, training or employment. I agree with you that your school lunches are good; they are freshly prepared, nutritious and tasty.

You can play your part in helping the school to become even better by making sure that you continue to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Marian Harker  
Her Majesty's Inspector