

# Bloomfield College

## Independent school standard inspection report

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
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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**

Bloomfield College is a secondary day school in Tipton, near to the border of Dudley and Sandwell metropolitan boroughs. The college admits boys and girls from 11 to 16 years of age. There are currently 29 students on roll, most are from White British families and are funded by six local authorities. Twenty five students have a statement of special educational needs primarily for complex behaviour, as well as social and emotional difficulties. Exceptionally, and with the agreement of the Department for Education, the college provides for students from Years 6 to 12 for the current academic year only and will revert to providing for Years 7 to 11 from September 2012.

The college opened in April 2008 and is located in a two-storey modern building. It is owned by Educare Adolescent Services Ltd. The college's mission statement is centred around respect, caring, achievement and enjoyment in education. The college was last inspected in July 2009.

## **Evaluation of the school**

Bloomfield College provides a good quality of education. The curriculum, teaching and assessment are good and, as a consequence, students' progress over time and in lessons is good. The college has maintained and improved upon the good provision from the previous inspection and continues to meet all of the requirements for registration. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and improvements in their behaviour are good. The welfare, health and safety of the students are good and safeguarding requirements are met. The college is successful in meeting its stated aims because the headteacher and senior team engender an ethos in which all students feel valued and nurtured.

## **Quality of education**

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced, and follows National Curriculum guidelines at Key Stage 3. Students in Key Stage 4 study an appropriate range of GCSE and other external examination courses which rightly focus on key skills in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT).

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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).

The college ensures that the requirements of individual statements of special educational needs are fully met through the curriculum. The good curriculum for personal, social and health education makes a positive contribution to students' personal development and prepares them well for their next steps in education, employment or training. Students join the college from a wide variety of educational settings and most students have not attended for long periods of time. The college is particularly successful in re-engaging students in their learning and raising their aspirations for the future. As a result, most students take up post-16 courses at the end of Year 11. Students receive good quality careers advice and guidance through weekly visits from the Connexions service adviser. Although the college does not currently provide opportunities for work experience, appropriate plans are in place to develop this aspect of the curriculum. Students have regular opportunities to develop their physical education skills through football, skipping, swimming, cycling and visits to the local gym. There are many visitors to the college and off-site visits to enrich the curriculum. Recent visits from local celebrity 'Blind Dave', a marathon runner and charity fundraiser, and a demonstration from the police sniffer dog team were enjoyed by the students. A strength of the college is the personal and social development of the students. Parents and carers report that they have observed positive changes in the behaviour and attitudes of their children since attending the college. One parent or carer typically commented, 'My son has improved so much with his school work. The staff always come up with solutions and ideas to help him improve his behaviour.'

Teaching and assessment are good and the students make good progress over time. Provision is not yet outstanding because the quality of teaching, and thus students' progress, is sometimes variable. However, staff know all the students very well, and lessons are well planned and routinely take into account the needs and interests of individual students. For example, teachers take account of students' preferred learning styles and ensure that activities support the requirements of individual statements of special educational needs. Behaviour is well managed in lessons and staff are skilful and tenacious in re-engaging students in their tasks. All adults work effectively together and as class sizes are small, students receive a good amount of individual help and support. Relationships between adults and students are good humoured and positive, and as result, students are motivated to learn and behave well. In one of the best lessons observed, students learned how to create a batik design for the first time. The learning was very carefully modelled and planned in small steps. Students were clear about what that they had to do, including how to keep themselves safe using hot wax, and as a result they made outstanding progress in their learning. In some lessons, opportunities are missed to fully challenge more-able students or to promote independent learning skills and this limits progress.

The college has developed a good assessment framework that includes thorough induction procedures and regular assessments for academic progress as well as social and emotional development, and behaviour. Students' books are regularly marked with helpful comments and teachers routinely provide information about how work could be improved further. The school keeps a close eye on how different groups of students are progressing. School tracking data indicate that most students

make good progress over time, often from very low starting points. Girls achieve better than boys, particularly in English. Those students who are looked after achieve in line with their peers. Students leave the college with a suitable range of qualifications although levels of attainment remain low.

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

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students demonstrate a sense of achievement and success through re-engaging with their learning and working towards nationally recognised qualifications. This is evident in their high rates of attendance, the latest college data indicating that attendance is 97% so far this year. Students' social and moral development is exemplary. Adults provide good role models and take every opportunity to improve students' social skills to enable them to make a positive contribution to the college and the wider community. Students participate in inter-school football competitions, undertake small jobs to keep the site clean and tidy, and collect food for local elderly residents. Staff consistently reinforce and promote the key values and principles of good citizenship, and this helps students to have a good understanding of right and wrong. Over time, this approach is having a positive impact on the good improvements observed in students' behaviour. As a result, there is a calm atmosphere around the college. Behaviour logs indicate that when incidents occur students are sensitively supported to 'put things right'. Students are polite and courteous to visitors and they demonstrate tolerance and respect for others. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and have positive attitudes to learning. Students report that they all get on well together and appreciate the work the college has done to improve their behaviour and in helping them to achieve their goals. Students have many opportunities to celebrate and explore their own cultural heritage and that of others through whole school celebrations. These include the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, fundraising for Comic Relief and celebrating Christmas, Hawaiian style. Spirituality is developed through the college's clear ethos for respect and tolerance. Students particularly look forward to taking care of the college guinea pig, Timmy, and weekly 'Circle of Friends' whole school assemblies provide opportunities to reflect on current world issues and to learn about different faiths and cultures. The personal, social and health education curriculum alongside citizenship lessons ensures that students have a good understanding of the role of public organisations in England. The college has been successful in re-integrating some students back into maintained educational settings. One student typically summed up the thoughts of others, commenting, 'The people in the school help you feel like the future is getting better.'

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

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out for activities both on and away from the college site. Students are taught to be aware of potential hazards in practical lessons and they are well supervised at all times. Fire evacuations are practised regularly and an appropriate number of staff have been trained in first aid. The headteacher is the

designated person for child protection and he has a very secure understanding of his role and responsibilities. All the required training for child protection has been completed by the headteacher and the staff.

Students report that they feel safe in college and are well-supported by staff. Parents and carers too report that their children are well looked after by the college. One parent or carer typically commented, 'My son feels safe at school and is looked after properly.' The curriculum for personal, social and health education covers key areas such as substance misuse, sex and relationships, e-safety and cyber bullying. Healthy breakfast, break and lunchtime food choices are popular with students. Lunchtimes are friendly and relaxed and all the students and staff eat together, promoting a good sense of community. Bullying records indicate that incidents are rare and, when they do occur, are often related to name calling. The college deals with bullying very swiftly and effectively. Although the college is a non-smoking site, several students have established smoking habits which the college manages well by restricting opportunities for smoking to a minimum. The college fully meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

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

The college complies fully with the regulations in respect of all the checks made on prospective employees. Staff and proprietors have undergone enhanced checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) to confirm their suitability to work with students. The single central register contains all of the required information.

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

The college is located in a fully refurbished two-storey modern office building and provides a good quality environment for effective learning. The premises have been planned to provide appropriate internal teaching areas, practical classrooms, an ICT suite, dining room and small hall. The outdoor area is appropriate for the number of students on roll and provides a safe area for recreation.

### **Provision of information**

The college has established strong links with parents, carers, outside agencies and placing authorities. Parents and carers are kept well informed through regular telephone calls, home visits and annual review meetings. All parents and carers report that they are kept very well informed about their children's academic progress, behaviour and personal development.

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

The college has a clearly written and fair complaints procedure which meets the regulatory 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 teachers plan suitable activities to consistently challenge more-able students.
- Provide regular opportunities for students to develop their independent learning skills.

## 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>	Special school for students with complex behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
<b>Date school opened</b>	April 2008		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 24	Girls: 5	Total: 29
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 21	Girls: 4	Total: 25
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 14	Girls: 5	Total: 19
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£38,025		
<b>Address of school</b>	Bloomfield Road, Tipton, DY4 9ER		
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 520 9408		
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:bloomfieldoffice@educareservices.co.uk">bloomfieldoffice@educareservices.co.uk</a>		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Harding		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Brian Scaln and Glyn Condliffe		

**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.**



22 June 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of Bloomfield College, Tipton, DY4 9ER**

I am writing to thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me when I visited your college. I enjoyed talking with you and hearing your comments. You told me that you were happy at Bloomfield College and I could see that this was the case in your good behaviour and high levels of attendance. I found that Bloomfield College is providing a good quality of education and that you make good progress. The college ensures that all government requirements are met. You have positive attitudes in your lessons and clearly enjoy practical work such as design technology, art and food technology.

I have asked your college to make sure that you are all given more opportunities to become independent learners, and those of you who are more able are provided with more challenging activities in lessons.

Thank you for completing the student questionnaire. You told me that almost all of you enjoy coming to college and you feel safe and well cared for by the staff. You also said that you appreciated how the school had helped you to improve your behaviour and to give you a positive outlook on the future. You can help the college to continue to improve by attending regularly, working hard and letting staff know if the work they give is too easy, too hard or just right.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Marian Harker  
Her Majesty's Inspector