

Values Academy

Gove Road, Nuneaton CV10 8JX

Inspection dates

18–20 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Sixth form provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Satisfactory

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This school requires improvement. It is not a good school because

- Pupils are too dependent on adults for their learning. This reduces their ability to work things out for themselves.
- Pupils' progress requires improvement in science, as pupils do not achieve well enough in higher examination grades.
- The expectations of pupils' academic work are too low. Pupils are not challenged enough in lessons. The use of targeted questioning by staff to extend their thinking is limited.
- Resources, and information and communication technology in particular, are inadequate and this has not improved since the last inspection.
- Trustees do not monitor the work of the school closely enough. Their involvement in the school's self-evaluation process is too limited and does not set out the school's strengths and where it needs to improve.
- Leaders have not ensured the school complies with all the independent school standards and that all the recommendations from the last inspection have been fully addressed.

The school has the following strengths

- The relatively new headteacher has set the school on course for improvement and her initiatives are starting to have a positive impact on teaching and pupils' progress, so that this is now an improving school.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to gain vocational qualifications.
- Pupils and parents spoken to have positive views of the school and acknowledge the improvements pupils are making, particularly in their behaviour. Pupils say they feel safe and are protected from any form of bullying.
- Pupils who have previously had poor attendance are now attending school more regularly than before.
- Pupils' personal development continues to improve and pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning and to each other.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Themed topics engage pupils' interest and provide good opportunities for numeracy and literacy skills to be applied in different contexts.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - decreasing pupils' reliance on adult support
 - more rigorously challenging and extending pupils' thinking and skills
 - improving the quantity and quality of resources to support learning.

- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - helping pupils to gain higher qualifications in science
 - setting higher expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons and in their books.

- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring the school meets all the regulations for independent special schools
 - improving the school's self-evaluation, so that it reflects its strengths and areas for improvement more accurately
 - developing measures to help trustees to check the work of the school more effectively.

The school must meet the following independent school standards:

- The proprietor must ensure there is a good quality and range of classroom resources and that they are utilised effectively (paragraph 3(f)).
- The proprietor must carry out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each person's medical fitness and where appropriate, the person's qualifications (paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(3)).
- The proprietor must ensure suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education (Paragraph 23(1)(c)).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently and their responsibilities are fulfilled effectively (34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders have not taken action to ensure all the required regulations for independent special schools are met. Neither medical nor fitness checks are carried out on staff. Although the qualifications of staff are checked, they are not recorded appropriately on the single central register. The quality and range of resources are inadequate. The accommodation is adequate to meet the learning needs of pupils, but there are no changing rooms or showers for pupils when they participate in physical education in the nearby park.
- The school's self-evaluation does not highlight strengths and areas for improvement sharply enough. Trustees have had limited involvement in the self-evaluation process and have not checked the work of the school sufficiently. They have not addressed all the key issues raised at the last inspection in relation to resources and improving the use of information and communication technology.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and management and, in a short period of time, has set the school on a clear path for improvement. She has set out a more ambitious culture of higher expectations across the school, which is beginning to influence pupils' and staff aspirations and starting to improve pupils' outcomes. Changes to teaching staff and more rigorous timetabling, ensuring that all subjects are taught more systematically, have started to accelerate pupils' academic progress.
- The new school improvement plan identifies sharper priorities for further improvement and the headteacher has implemented positive changes, such as sharing teaching expertise from the sister school.
- Middle leaders are starting to raise academic expectations of what pupils can achieve, to accompany the strong pastoral support the school provides. Evaluations of the quality of teaching and sharing of good practice across the school have started to improve teaching and outcomes for pupils. Middle leaders are rigorous in monitoring the achievement, attendance and behaviour of pupils both in school and while attending alternative provision.
- The range of subjects and experiences on offer is good, with the exception of science where there is a lack of specific subject expertise. The opportunity for pupils to achieve accredited vocational awards is a strength and pupils enjoy the work involved in this. Their good attendance reflects how beneficial and worthwhile they perceive these opportunities to be. Themed projects are very successful in motivating pupils and they produce some high-quality work and learn to apply skills and knowledge in practical tasks.
- The small amount of additional funding the school receives for disadvantaged pupils has been spent appropriately improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, helping to raise their attainment in basic skills, and improving their attendance.
- The work of teachers is checked well by the headteacher and has led to improvements in the quality of teaching as teachers use the good practice that has been shared from other teachers.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well. It is careful to meet the needs of the small number of girls effectively. The fostering of good relationships between staff and pupils is fundamental to the work of the school. Racial discrimination is rare, but is tackled very swiftly when it does occur. Pupils reported that they feel safe and free from any form of discrimination.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They experience different cultures through visits to Birmingham and visiting different places of worship. They learn about different beliefs, faiths and cultures. British values, such as the rule of law and respect, are discussed in religious education lessons and modelled well by staff through positive relationships with pupils. Staff have clear guidance, which has raised their awareness of how vulnerable pupils might be at risk of extremism.
- Pupils benefit from impartial careers education and guidance through clear and effective plans which are drawn up to enable them to achieve their goals for life after school.
- The quality of information for parents is good and parents spoken to felt they were well informed about the improvements their children make in their learning. They have confidence in the school and all commented on the positive improvements in behaviour they have noticed in their children.
- Leaders place a high priority on creating a safe culture in the school, where pupils feel protected and are confident that staff will listen if they share any concerns. The school works closely with parents, carers and other agencies to make sure that all pupils are supported and are safe. Placing authorities value the work of the school in helping pupils to re-engage in learning. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are effective.
- The procedure for handling complaints meets regulations.

■ **The governance of the school**

- The board of trustees meets regularly to discharge the duties of the charity and receives bi-monthly reports. Trustees have been instrumental in the key appointment of the new headteacher and they recognise the improvements she has secured.
- The board faces financial challenges and trustees know that resources need improving. Trustees have ensured that, through the headteacher, the performance management of teachers is implemented.
- Trustees make certain that the latest safeguarding requirements are met and a nominated trustee has overall responsibility for safeguarding for which they have received appropriate training.
- Trustees need a more accurate view of the quality of teaching and of pupils' achievement. The lack of clear measures to help them assess the work of the school and contribute to the school's self-evaluation limits their ability to monitor the work of the school effectively and hold it to account for its academic standards.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- The majority of learning for pupils takes place on an individual level with learning mentors. In lessons, the number of adults often unnecessarily exceeds the number of pupils. This means that too often pupils' independence and communication skills are not maximised, because they are too dependent on adult support.
- Mathematics and English teaching sometimes relies too heavily on the mundane completion of worksheets. Work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' abilities, to provide greater challenge and accelerate progress.
- Information and communication technology is not used well enough to help support pupils' learning. There are too few computers for pupils to use for their research, or compose and draft work. Resources in other subjects are too limited, for example in art, and there is a limited range of reading books.
- Over the last few months, teachers have introduced aspects of more effective practice seen in a sister school and this has started to improve the quality of their teaching. Signs of rapid improvement are being seen in the progress made by pupils in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are beginning to be taught more often in groups, to improve their social and communication skills, and this is starting to promote pupils' confidence and helping them to be more responsible for their learning.
- Lessons are of an appropriate length, allowing pupils to sustain concentration well. Most pupils settle quickly to work. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and supportive and this does much to maintain pupils' levels of concentration.
- When staff use practical activities, pupils become animated and keen to talk about what they are learning. These lessons are also used effectively to teach skills of numeracy and literacy in other contexts.
- Pupils' progress is tracked more effectively than at the time of the last inspection and this has identified underachievement, particularly in science, and provided a clearer view on what needs to be done to improve this area by providing better subject expertise.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly. These opportunities add richness, enjoyment and broader experiences for pupils. For example, they enjoy themed topics, based on their interests, which are used to increase pupils' awareness of diversity or different cultures and traditions.
- Pupils feel safe from bullying in school. Records indicate that bullying is rare and pupils feel confident

to share their concerns with staff. Staff take rapid action to address and tackle any discriminatory and derogatory language.

- The supportive pastoral environment helps to boost pupils' self-confidence and bring about greater stability in their emotional well-being, so they are more receptive to learning.
- Through the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme, pupils gain valuable insights into, and understanding of, current issues, such as substance misuse and the importance of positive personal relationships.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare when they attend alternative provision are good. Pupils enjoy vocational courses and these provide them with a sense of achievement when they acquire nationally recognised qualifications.
- At times, adults are too quick to provide support, denying pupils opportunities to work things out for themselves.
- Pupils are not able to change or shower after physical education due to the lack of facilities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff are skilled in managing pupils' behaviour and as a result, pupils are taught how to improve their behaviour over time. School records indicate that poor behaviour has decreased sharply and that pupils have learnt to become more tolerant and to improve their social interactions with staff and other pupils.
- Pupils mostly enter the school with a history of challenging behaviour and negative attitudes, and often refuse to engage in lessons. Pupils very quickly start to develop good learning habits when they join the school. Their attendance improves and they learn to sustain concentration well in lessons and try hard to achieve.
- Pupils' conduct and self-discipline improves quickly and over a short period of time after starting in the school. For example, pupils learn to regulate their own behaviour more effectively when they are angry and frustrated and, over time, this starts to impact less on their learning so incidents of disruption in classrooms reduce sharply.
- Many pupils have a history of poor attendance at their previous school. Most pupils make significant improvements in their attendance and many are reluctant to miss a day. The breakfast club provides a relaxed start to the day and encourages better attendance and punctuality. The school makes every effort to avoid exclusions and, therefore, these are rare.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' progress has started to improve over the last six months due to improved teaching and better subject expertise, but these improvements are not yet starting to make a difference to pupils' progress in science.
- The most-able pupils gain higher grades in some examinations, although grades at GCSE level are at the lower end of the scale. In some lessons, the most-able pupils are not challenged enough.
- In mathematics, pupils cover a suitable range of concepts, such as ratios, working out angles and handling data. In English, pupils know how to construct formal and informal letters and use evidence from text. However, the over-reliance on worksheets means that some tasks are mundane and fail to inspire pupils.
- Most pupils go on to further education or training when they leave school. The school has identified as a priority the need to further develop pupils' independent travel training skills, as this is a barrier to employment or training.
- The majority of pupils enter the school with very low levels of literacy and numeracy, mainly because of their disrupted education to date. However, by the end of Year 11, the majority of pupils achieve some form of nationally recognised qualification, such as entry-level certificates or functional skills in English and mathematics, appropriate to their needs and interests.
- Pupils with special educational needs, such as Asperger's Syndrome, are given suitable support so that they progress at similar rates to other pupils. Education, health and care plans are used well to gain a fuller picture of pupils' difficulties and strengths so that, after a period of initial assessment, gaps in their learning can be addressed.

- The use of alternative and off-site providers allows good opportunities for work-related learning, which pupils enjoy. They learn how to apply for jobs and money management skills, and follow courses of interest to them.
- Few pupils qualify for the additional pupil premium funding. This funding is used effectively to help individual pupils to make up lost ground in English and mathematics, so they achieve on an equal footing with their peers in the school.

Sixth form provision

requires improvement

- The same weaknesses identified in teaching and pupils' outcomes in other year groups apply to the sixth form, as there is no separate, distinct sixth form provision because the number of learners is so small.
- The headteacher provides overall leadership of the sixth form. Since her appointment, she has started to introduce better monitoring of alternative providers and to bring about greater rigour to ensure learners achieve the expected levels of qualifications.
- Sixth form pupils continue to follow courses suitable to their aptitudes, concentrating on literacy and numeracy skills and pursuing vocational studies. Their programmes of study build upon their previous learning and equip them to acquire nationally recognised awards, which prepare them for further training or employment.
- The curriculum meets learners' needs appropriately. They undertake a wider range of vocational subjects with local providers, such as land-based activities. Learners continue to develop their basic skills and to improve on previous examination results.
- Sixth form learners feel safe when they attend courses off-site. They usually have a member of staff from the school to accompany them, until they are able to manage more independently. These courses contribute effectively to learners' readiness for life after school.
- Learners' attendance is generally good and they enjoy their courses. They behave well and develop their self-confidence.

School details

Unique reference number	137597
Inspection number	10006118
DfE registration number	937/6000

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	Secondary day school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	17
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	2
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Values Academy
Chair	Altine Topping
Headteacher	Sandra Jones
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,105
Telephone number	024 7632 6383
Website	www.valuesacademy.org.uk
Email address	Sandra.jones@valuesacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 March 2013

Information about this school

- Values Academy, formerly known as Parkside School, is a secondary day school located in a residential area of Nuneaton, Warwickshire. It is owned by Values Academy, a privately owned non-profit-making limited company, which is also a registered charity.
- The school provides education for male and female pupils aged 11 to 18 years who experience social, emotional and mental health difficulties. There are currently 17 pupils on roll.
- All have a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plans and are placed at the school by local authorities. Two pupils are looked after by the local authority. Most pupils have been permanently excluded or withdrawn from their previous education.
- The school aims to 'improve pupils' quality of life through Values Education'.
- The school opened in October 2011. Its first full Ofsted inspection took place in October 2012 when it met nearly all the independent school regulations and was judged to provide a satisfactory quality of education. It subsequently received an emergency unannounced visit in March 2013 and the school was found to fully meet the regulatory requirements. The headteacher took up her post in March 2015.
- The school uses two alternative providers, Coombe Abbey and Moor Farm, which provide land-based and horticultural courses.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed eight parts of lessons, all of which were jointly observed with the senior leaders.
- Pupils' work, surveys, annual reports and other records were scrutinised.
- Twenty-three staff responses to a questionnaire were analysed. The school's documentation was examined, including planning for subjects, records of pupils' progress and 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 discussions and eight responses to a school-based questionnaire.
- Three parents spoke to the lead inspector. There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, to register a response.

Inspection team

Frank Price, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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