

Bloomfield School

Bloomfield Road, Tipton, Staffordshire DY4 9ER

Inspection dates

2–4 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Outcomes for children and learners

Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school's supportive and nurturing environment is a key factor in pupils' academic improvements as it provides them with stability, encouragement and high expectations.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding. This is a remarkable achievement given pupils' previous often negative experiences of education.
- The leadership and management of the school are good. The newly established Dudley Port Annex provides good accommodation, where teaching and outcomes are good.
- Senior leaders rigorously check the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. Weaknesses in teaching are addressed swiftly, so that the school is always striving to improve.
- Pupils achieve well and are prepared effectively for their next stage of life so that they can move onto further education or training.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Positive relationships help to engage pupils in learning. Staff set high academic expectations for pupils, to which they respond well.
- The excellent displays around the school provide strong aspirational messages for pupils. They treat the fabric of the school, and each other, with respect. They start to mature well and are a credit to the school.
- The school goes above and beyond to enable pupils to achieve, such as providing transport to ensure that pupils attend school.
- All the independent school standards are fully met.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Governance arrangements are not robust enough to monitor, challenge and support the school sufficiently.
- The school has not yet developed its own assessment arrangements sufficiently, following the removal of national curriculum levels, to equip teachers to set work that is consistently challenging.
- Teaching is not outstanding because learning objectives shared with pupils by teachers do not always ensure that pupils are fully challenged. Limitations in the information and communication technology capability within the school mean pupils do not maximise this resource to support their learning.
- Measures to evaluate the effectiveness of additional funding are not sharp enough.

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?

- Improve pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that learning objectives in lessons are more precise to increase the level of challenge
 - improve pupils' use of information and communication technology so that they use it more regularly and effectively to support their learning
 - further developing the school's assessment arrangements, so that assessment is more effective in accelerating pupils' progress.

- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - strengthening governance arrangements to challenge and support the school
 - developing measures, which are published on the school website, to judge the impact of pupil premium funding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The school meets all the independent school standards.
- The headteacher, along with other senior leaders, has very successfully created an ambitious climate for pupils' achievement. Pupils quickly adopt these high expectations and their aspirations start to increase. The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership, which focuses relentlessly on improving all aspects of the school. Pupils thrive and the majority of parents and carers recognise how well their children start to achieve.
- The subjects and experiences offered to pupils are good, covering all the relevant areas of learning. They are well suited to the needs of pupils and allow them to achieve nationally recognised qualifications and experience success.
- Careers education and guidance offered to pupils is impartial and this prepares pupils well for the future. Pupils have opportunities for work-related placements, tailored to meet their interest, and these often lead to pupils studying relevant courses when they move on to further education.
- The school makes use of one alternative provider, for vocational courses. This provision is monitored closely to ensure that pupils are safe and that they make progress.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate, identifying its strengths and areas for improvement clearly. The school improvement plan links well to this, and provides a helpful blueprint for future developments.
- The performance management arrangements for teachers are developing and the school is considering how the relationship between performance and salary progression can be more effective. Teaching and learning are checked regularly by the headteacher. Where weaknesses in teaching are identified these are addressed with vigour.
- Senior leaders accurately judge the quality of teaching and learning. They have ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the two school sites. The successful establishment of the Dudley Port Annex indicates the school's capacity to continue to improve.
- The school actively prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. British values are clearly promoted around the school through a variety of displays. Pupils also understand these values and cover these through the citizenship programme. The school's ethos strongly emphasises equality and respect. Pupils are tolerant of each other and the school is very harmonious. Discrimination is challenged vigorously and pupils learn the importance of tolerance and good behaviour. Pupils' excellent social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered very effectively by all staff.
- Safeguarding procedures are rigorous. Staff have received good training, so they are alert to potential causes of concern. Where there are concerns, records of contact with other agencies are very clear and issues are followed up until matters are resolved. The headteacher and other designated safeguarding leads are trained at appropriate levels. Safeguarding procedures take into account the latest statutory guidance. Pupils are taught about the dangers of extremism.
- The school works very closely with parents and carers and does all it can to overcome obstacles, which may impede pupils' attendance or learning. Initially, some pupils are reluctant to attend school but staff work well with families to improve attendance and provide additional help and support where needed.
- The school is aware that slow broadband speed, and the need to upgrade some of its hardware, limits the effectiveness of information and communication technology to support pupils in their learning.
- The school receives a limited amount of additional funding for vulnerable pupils. This money is used to provide additional help and support for these pupils, but measures to evaluate the impact of these strategies and funding are not developed well enough and not posted on the school's website as required.
- The procedure for handling complaints meets regulations.
- **The governance of the school**
 - There is no formal governance, but an executive committee provides some oversight of the school. The headteacher provides written reports to the committee on a monthly basis.
 - The company has employed an external consultant to provide an objective view of the school and to provide advice for further improvements. However, visits to the school by committee members are infrequent and their detailed knowledge of the school is limited. The headteacher is being held increasingly to account through performance management. The school recognises that governance arrangements are in the early stages of development in terms of providing challenge and support.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers consistently and systematically encourage pupils' positive attitudes to learning. They have high academic expectations of pupils. Supportive and encouraging relationships promote pupils' self-esteem outstandingly well and they start to thrive.
- Classrooms and corridors are bright, with attractive displays which reinforce positive messages about achievement and behaviour.
- Effective teaching allows pupils to gain nationally recognised qualifications to boost their self-confidence. The school enters some pupils for early entry qualifications, so that they can taste success and then work toward improved grades in the following year. This is a sensible approach, particularly as some pupils do not complete their schooling if they are taken into care and removed from school.
- Teaching captures pupils' motivation well and often there are practical elements to lessons, which pupils enjoy. In a science lesson, pupils understood the concept of convection currents through heating water and dissolving potassium permanganate and observing and recording their results. Pupils also enjoy food technology, such as making Chinese meals to celebrate the Chinese New Year.
- Mathematics is taught well using practical methods. Pupils develop their understanding of ratio and scale by using Ordnance Survey maps and calculating distances. In a lesson on area, pupils' interests were used to calculate dimensions needed for different types of sports equipment.
- Teaching actively promotes British values and equality. For example, in a citizenship lesson, pupils gained an understanding of what it is to be British and that it is not related to colour or race.
- Learning objectives in lessons are not precise enough. This means that sometimes pupils' learning needs are not met well enough. On occasions, some of the least-able pupils struggle because the work is not pitched at the right level and some of the most-able pupils repeat some work unnecessarily. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are systematically taught so that they are confident in these basic skills.
- Pupils' progress is closely tracked and pupils who do not make expected progress are given additional support, such as in literacy, to help them improve their spelling, reading and handwriting. However, the school has not yet developed its own assessment arrangements sufficiently to account for the changes in tracking of pupils' progress following changes to the national curriculum.

The personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils develop their self-confidence well, become more mature and value their education. They engage readily in lessons. Pupils are keen learners and have a thirst for knowledge. Poor behaviour rarely impedes learning.
- Pupils told the inspector they felt very safe in school and that incidents of bullying are rare. They are able to articulate how to keep themselves safe online.
- Pupils are encouraged to become responsible citizens. They gain an understanding of their local Black Country heritage as well as that of wider communities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a variety of ways. These include regular assemblies and opportunities for pupils to reflect on values such as the importance of good manners.
- Pupils' views of school are very positive and they enjoy learning and start to appreciate the importance of education for their future. They respect the fabric of the school, respect displays and show pride in their work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is excellent, particularly given their previous experiences. Improvements are very rapid over a short period of time.
- There are no exclusions. The school works well with pupils to turn their behaviour around. One ex-pupil reflected on how much the school had helped him and said, 'They wiped the slate clean', so that he was able to fulfil his potential in sport at a high professional level.
- Attendance is broadly average, but represents vast improvement for many pupils and indicates how much pupils enjoy school.

- The school is calm and orderly. Behaviour in and outside of lessons is equally outstanding. Breakfast clubs and lunchtimes are valuable and pleasant, sociable occasions for staff and pupils.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare in alternative provision are excellent. This is because courses are carefully tailored to pupils' needs and prepare them well for their next stage of education.

The outcomes for pupils

are good

- Nearly all pupils have had a fragmented previous education and this means that most pupils enter the school with below-average levels of attainment. By the time they leave school, for most their attainment is still below average. Despite the school's best efforts, factors outside the school's control can limit pupils' achievement.
- Most pupils make good progress from their starting points. The school sets suitable targets for pupils to achieve and the majority of pupils make expected or better than expected progress.
- Pupils start to experience success and achieve qualifications which are appropriate to their level of ability at entry level or GCSE. Pupils' qualifications in English are starting to improve through systematic additional literacy support.
- More-able pupils achieve well, given their starting points, in GCSE grades in a range of subjects. Some gain grades which compare well to pupils nationally in subjects such as art and humanities.
- Pupils' work in books is presented well and lends weight to the good progress they sustain over time. Pupils know how to improve their work through effective marking which tells them what they need to work on next. Their work reflects teachers' high expectations required of them.
- Some vulnerable pupils do not make the same rate of progress as their peers, but through effective support they are beginning to make up lost ground. Pupils who have additional learning needs are well supported so that they can achieve their potential.
- Selective use of vocational courses enables pupils to achieve qualifications in areas such as construction or hair and beauty courses.
- A measure of success is the high number of pupils who progress on to employment or training when they leave the school. Pupils respond well to high aspirations and one pupil spoke of his enjoyment of mathematics and wanting to be an accountant.

School details

Unique reference number	135518
Inspection number	10008602
DfE registration number	333/6004

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	Special for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Number of part time pupils	2
Proprietor	Horizon Care Ltd
Chair	Paul Callander
Headteacher	Andrew Harding
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,025
Telephone number	0121 5209408
Website	www.bloomfieldschool.co.uk
Email address	bloomfieldoffice@horizoncare.co.uk
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 June 2012

Information about this school

- Bloomfield School is a secondary day school in Tipton for pupils who may have a combination of social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school admits boys and girls from 11 to 16 years of age. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and have a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plans.
- Since the time of the last inspection, a separate annex has been established a short distance away at the Dudley Port Training Centre, Station Drive, Tipton, so the school is now dual-site.
- Permission to increase its number to a maximum of 56 was granted at a monitoring visit which took place in February 2015, when it was deemed to meet all the independent school standards.
- The school was last fully inspected in June 2012.
- The school uses Nova Training as an alternative provider for vocational courses such as construction.
- The school enters some pupils for early entry examinations.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed 10 parts of lessons, all of which were joint lesson observations with senior leaders.
- 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 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 formal and informal discussions and a survey.
- There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, but the inspector met with one parent, and took into account other comments and a school-based questionnaire.

Inspection team

Frank Price, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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