

EdStart

Woodvale Centre, 130 Sale Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester M23 0BX

Inspection dates	8–9 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Satisfactory

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have acted decisively in addressing the key issues identified in the last inspection. This has resulted in demonstrable improvements in outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Staff rightly focus on pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, and they respond accordingly.
- Pupils who have demonstrated challenging behaviour in their previous schools work well in class and cooperate with staff.
- Good-quality teaching, learning and assessment grab pupils' interests and keep them motivated and keen to learn.
- Achievement is rising. In 2015, all Year 11 pupils moved onto further education, training or employment.
- Pupils with different abilities and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points which are typically low.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is good. Planned activities, such as studying different faiths and beliefs, and visits to other communities, help to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The school provides an interesting and engaging curriculum. It enables pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding, and improve their skills in a range of artistic, creative and sporting activities.
- Leaders and the proprietor have ensured that the independent school standards are met.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Priorities for improvement are not always closely enough linked to pupils' outcomes. This makes it difficult for leaders to check how successful they have been.
- The attendance of a few pupils remains too low.
- The most-able pupils find some of the work too easy.

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 the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that the development plan makes it clear how the school will judge its success in relation to pupils' academic achievements.
- Ensure that the most-able pupils are given tasks that are more challenging and make them think.
- Raise the level of attendance for the minority of pupils whose attendance is not as good as it should be.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders and the proprietor have ensured that the school fully complies with the independent school standards.
- Central to the success of the school and the improvements made from the last inspection has been the determined and effective leadership of the headteacher. Well supported by the governing body and other leaders, he has ensured that the vision for the school is delivered in practice.
- Parents, referring schools and the pupils themselves all agree that school is successful in improving pupils' attitudes, behaviour and learning. 'I have seen a massive change in him since arriving at EdStart, he's doing the work set and asking for homework, is typical of the comments made by parents.
- Leaders and staff have an accurate understanding of how well pupils are performing because tracking systems are comprehensive, with feedback provided to pupils individually on a weekly basis. They use this information well to spot any changes in attitude or underperformance, and intervene effectively where necessary.
- Records of pupils' progress and scrutiny of their work demonstrates that the school's approach is working well and illustrates the impressive strides that many pupils have made since joining the school.
- The school provides an interesting and engaging curriculum for pupils. It enables them to extend their knowledge and understanding of a wide variety of subjects, including English and mathematics, as well as improving their skills in a range of artistic, creative and sporting activities.
- Leaders check planning and the quality of teaching with much more rigour than when the school was last inspected. Effective systems to manage teachers' performance ensure that school leaders have an accurate picture of where there are strengths and weaknesses, and plan any interventions and support proportionately. This helps to explain why teachers feel better supported and why pupils' learning, and the progress they make, continue to improve.
- The school development plan focuses on the right priorities but, in its present form, does not provide enough information on how leaders will know that they have been successful in achieving their goals, such as better examination results or faster progress.
- There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills in getting on with others. Staff promote fundamental British values well. Fairness, tolerance and the need for a rule of law are discussed and explained. Pupils show a growing awareness of how their actions can impinge on the freedom of others and the need to consider, and then modify, their own behaviour.
- All pupils experience courses of study which celebrate different beliefs and cultures as well as promoting equality of opportunity and diversity. These are enhanced by the school's links to faith schools and by visiting speakers from different communities. Discussions with leaders, staff and pupils confirm that any prejudiced behaviour is not tolerated. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- The school operates on two sites which are approximately nine miles apart. However, due to the careful monitoring by school leaders, there is no variation in the outcomes or the effectiveness of the provision between the different sites.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governors are kept fully informed about the school by the headteacher. They ensure that he is held to account for the school and the improvements that have been made during their regular meetings.
 - The governors monitor all aspects of the school, including funding arrangements, to ensure that any funding is targeted to best meet the needs of the growing number of pupils.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Staff are fully trained in safeguarding matters, as well as in first aid, so that the welfare, health and safety of pupils can be assured.
- School leaders carry out regular safeguarding checks of the premises and respond promptly to any risks identified. For example, when the headteacher identified a potential trip hazard on the Wythenshawe site, it was repaired within the same day.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers' expectations of pupils' learning have risen as the benefits of better management of behaviour have been realised. Planning of work is more detailed than in the past, and both teachers and pupils are clear about what the expected learning in a lesson is likely to be. Activities are generally well chosen so that they motivate pupils and stimulate their interest.
- Staff are successful in managing pupils' behaviour and attitudes. They use praise and encouragement well to highlight desired behaviour and to keep pupils engaged in the activities to hand. This enables learning to take place and there is an expectation that all lessons will be purposeful. Inspection evidence confirms that this is the case.
- Good use is made of the information received from referring schools to ensure that work is set for pupils at just the right level when they arrive. This information is supplemented with an accurate baseline screening assessment completed by EdStart staff. As a result, pupils are provided with individual programmes of work and staff know where there are gaps in prior learning that need to be addressed.
- Teaching ensures that the different groups of pupils are well supported. Consequently, teachers working with least-able pupils and those who have special educational needs prepare tasks and activities that meet their specific needs.
- A similar pattern is found in planning the learning for the most-able pupils. Just occasionally, these pupils are working on tasks that are too easy for them and this slows the progress that they make. For example, during mathematics activities, the most-able pupils are sometimes given consolidation work in basic number operations that they complete quickly with little effort. They become more easily distracted because there is no extension work or problem solving that will make them think more deeply.
- Staff do their best to ensure that all pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Understandably, teachers concentrate on addressing any gaps they find in pupils' basic skills. Helpful feedback, including marking, helps to ensure that pupils are fully aware of what they need to do to improve.
- The school meets the independent school standards for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff successfully help pupils to develop strategies to cope with conflict, anger, stress and anxiety.
- Pupils thrive in a positive atmosphere where the importance of acceptable and appropriate behaviour is paramount.
- 'Expecting and demanding the best' are strong elements of the staff approach and they present good role models as they demonstrate to pupils how to avoid confrontation and defuse situations.
- Personal, social and health education is an integral part of the curriculum. Pupils gain an up-to-date knowledge of issues including e-safety, bullying in its various forms and the dangers of stereotyping.
- Relationships at all levels are good and this boosts pupils' self-confidence because they know that they can approach any adult if they have a concern. They also know that their views and opinions will be sought and taken seriously.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This represents impressive progress given that many have been identified as behaving unacceptably in their referring schools or units.
- Records show that, in many cases, there has been a remarkable change in pupils' behaviour over a short period of time. Most have settled well at the school and are generally polite and respectful. They apply themselves maturely and sensibly in most lessons. 'I'm much better at managing my anger here because the staff listen to me and we all get on. I like the smaller groups, is typical of the comments made by pupils.
- Occasionally, pupils do lose control, ignore requests or shout out. Staff use very effective and well-tested strategies to deal with these situations, often by involving support workers. The learning of other pupils within the group is rarely affected by these outbursts.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and they feel safe in school. Records confirm that this is the case.

- Many pupils were poor attenders prior to joining the school. Records suggest that there are good improvements in attendance for many. For example, the most recent analysis shows that around two thirds of pupils are attending more regularly than they did in their referring schools. Nevertheless, a few still do not attend regularly and this inevitably affects the progress that they make.
- The school meets the required standards in relation to pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes are improving because of the good-quality teaching, learning and assessment, and the increased attention given to pupils' academic progress.
- Almost all pupils who join EdStart arrive with knowledge and skills that are below those of others of similar ages in schools nationally. This is often because of irregular attendance at their referring schools.
- From these low starting points, almost all pupils make the progress expected of them and many make more rapid progress. The school agrees challenging targets with the pupils and regularly checks with them to find out if there are any barriers to learning. Evidence of these improvements can be illustrated by recent results. In 2015, all Year 11 pupils achieved at least one recognised qualification in English and mathematics, with many gaining more than this.
- There are only small numbers of pupils in each year group. Scrutiny of records and pupils' workbooks confirms that there is no significant difference in the achievement or rates of progress made by disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs, those who need to catch up and the most able.
- Older pupils successfully follow GCSE courses in English, mathematics, religious studies and computing. These enhance their basic skills well and help pupils to access the wider curriculum opportunities that the school offers. For example, older pupils were able to identify speech patterns and the key components required to make a successful presentation as they studied the film, *The King's Speech*. 'I will need to be able to write well and talk clearly when I go for my interview', was how one pupil explained why learning to express himself was so important.
- The school is preparing pupils well for the next stage of their education. Pupils take a qualification in Preparation for Working Life, which encourages them to gain valuable independent skills. All members of the Year 11 group in 2015 moved onto further education, training or employment.
- The school meets the independent school standards for pupils' academic development.

School details

Unique reference number	137275
Inspection number	10006128
DfE registration number	352/6003
Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	James Lowe and Chris Irwin
Chair	Chris Irwin
Headteacher	James Lowe
Annual fees (day pupils)	£10,250
Telephone number	0161 945 8940
Website	www.edstart.org.uk
Email address	james@edstart.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	July 2012

Information about this school

- EdStart is an independent day school which provides alternative provision for pupils aged between 13 and 16.
- The headteacher is also a director of EdStart.
- At the time of the inspection there were 45 pupils on roll. There are no disabled pupils. The school provides full-time education for pupils who have previously had significant difficulties with their behaviour in school and were at risk of permanent exclusion.
- The school's current main site is located in a detached three-storey house in Wythenshawe, on the outskirts of Manchester. There are currently 23 pupils, who are in either Years 10 or 11, based on this site.
- The proprietors have acquired additional premises in Salford. This is a distance of nine miles from the main premises. Currently, the additional premises are being used for the education of 22 pupils, 20 of whom are in Year 9 and two pupils who are in Year 10. No pupils travel between the two sites.
- Nearly all pupils have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Many have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be in receipt of pupil premium funding in their referring schools is above average. Pupil premium funding is additional funding for those pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those pupils who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school does not use alternative providers.
- The school's previous standard inspection (also its first inspection) took place in July 2012. It was judged to be providing a satisfactory quality of education and met all the independent school regulations.
- A material change inspection took place in November 2015 in order to consider the school's application to register its additional premises in Salford.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning across different age groups, in different subjects and on both sites. Some observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke with staff, leaders and pupils. He also received email correspondence from parents and from pupils' referring schools or units.
- The inspector analysed the school's records of pupils' achievements and behaviour. He scrutinised samples of pupils' work as well as school policies and other documentation to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspector considered responses to six inspection questionnaires returned by members of staff. There were not enough responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, for these to be analysed.

Inspection team

Mike Hewlett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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