

Build-a-Future Independent School

Build-A-Future, Main Street, West Ashby, Lincolnshire LN9 5PT

Inspection dates

26–28 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The quality of teaching is good. Pupils with previously negative attitudes to education, respond positively to good teaching and begin to close gaps in their learning.
- Senior leaders have excellent knowledge and understanding of pupils' emotional and social needs. They have established an ethos of cooperation and mutual respect with pupils.
- Staff assess pupils' starting points accurately and check regularly on pupils' progress with their learning. Pupils make good progress towards suitable external examinations.
- The curriculum provides an effective balance between academic subjects, vocational learning and pupils' personal development.
- Pupils enjoy their work and achieve well in vocational areas of learning. This, combined with good careers education and advice, helps pupils to choose appropriate career pathways.
- No year group has yet completed a full year of education at this new school. However, almost all pupils in Year 11 have completed an application or received an offer of a place at a college of further education.
- Pupils are safe in school. They learn about risks to which they may be exposed, including sexual or criminal exploitation, extremism and online abuse.
- The great majority of parents and carers who completed a recent questionnaire, state their children are safe and happy at the school and are making good progress.
- Overall attendance requires improvement. Many pupils have previous records of poor or erratic attendance. While the attendance of some pupils improves significantly, there is still too much unauthorised absence.
- An effective start has been made with arrangements for evaluating all aspects of the school's work. These are not yet rigorous enough to ensure that teachers have a consistent approach to improving pupils' written work.
- The proprietor has planned appropriately to extend and formalise the work of the governing body.
- The proprietor and senior leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

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?

- Strengthen arrangements to improve the attendance of pupils, including the elimination of persistent absence.
- Improve oversight and accountability for all aspects of the school's leadership and management, by implementing planned governance arrangements.
- Extend and consolidate arrangements for the monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement of teaching and learning.
- Ensure a systematic approach to the teaching of basic skills, particularly writing, across all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor and senior leaders have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- The headteacher has developed a culture of commitment and resilience among the staff at both centres, ably supported by the experience and leadership skills of his centre leads. Together, they work by example and have established strong teamwork throughout the staff in managing behaviour and motivating pupils.
- Senior leaders and staff are ambitious, positive and optimistic for pupils' success. They enable pupils to refocus their commitment to effective learning and appropriate behaviour. Pupils respect the staff, and positive relationships enable pupils to improve their commitment to effective learning.
- Senior leaders continuously monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum. Pupils have access to suitable qualifications to equip them for further study and work-related learning. All pupils have suitably balanced timetables, combining academic subjects and vocational courses. All courses lead to appropriate qualifications.
- The curriculum also provides pupils with excellent opportunities to develop independence skills, for example, through working in the school kitchen. Staff combine the development of pupils' practical skills with opportunities to address the challenges of a personal healthy lifestyle.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have appointed suitable staff to contribute further expertise in the oversight and development of teaching and learning. Their arrangements for regular checks on the quality of pupils' learning and achievement are well placed to inform the work of the governing body in holding senior leaders and staff to account.
- All pupils receive appropriate support and advice about future careers. They are realistic and well informed about the opportunities available at local colleges of further education and future employment prospects. Individual pupils are supported well as they apply for college placements, prepare for interviews and visit appropriate providers.
- The curriculum and quality of relationships and expectations combine well to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils understand British values through themes and activities, including, for example, practical illustration of the democratic process through a ballot to choose the destination for a leisure activity.
- Senior leaders are very aware of the challenge to improve the attendance of persistent absentees. They work relentlessly with placing schools, the local authority and parents and carers, to address the attendance of individual pupils. The school's development plan includes additional strategies to make further progress towards improved attendance.
- Senior leaders have made a strong start in establishing an effective school and demonstrate good capacity for continued improvement.

Governance

- The school's planned arrangements for a governing body are at an early stage of implementation. The proprietor has invited a small number of local contacts, with appropriate skills and experience, to join the governing body. The first formal meeting is planned for the summer term.
- The proprietor maintains continuous oversight through dialogue with the headteacher. Together, and working effectively with senior leaders, they demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement. They have refocused the curriculum towards a greater emphasis on full-time education with the opportunity for all pupils to achieve meaningful qualifications.
- The proprietor and headteacher maintain effective arrangements for the evaluation of the school's current work and plans for further development. To date they have benefited from independent audit of the school's work by a local academy trust, and through local authority quality assurance of their admission and curriculum arrangements.
- The school's self-evaluation is updated regularly and plans for further improvement are ambitious and appropriate. Senior leaders, supported effectively by the proprietor, provide suitable opportunities for the further development of staff. A number of teachers are involved in further training to enhance their qualifications and teaching skills.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school has produced a safeguarding policy which has regard to the latest government guidance and the requirements of the local authority. The policy is available to parents through the school's website.
- The safeguarding lead staff have received training at the required level as provided by the local authority. All staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding, including the recognition of the signs of abuse, how to manage a concern or disclosure from a pupil, and the implementation of the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Staff are trained in safeguarding procedures at induction, and receive regular refresher update training, including an understanding of child sexual exploitation, online abuse and extremism.
- Senior leaders are vigilant in managing risks and educating pupils to be aware of risks to their safety and well-being. The designated safeguarding leads have established strong working relationships with local agencies responsible for working with pupils at risk.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The good quality of teaching is based on effective planning, which develops pupils' knowledge and understanding progressively. Teachers provide clear learning objectives for each lesson and pupils regularly self-assess the extent to which they meet these. Teachers encourage pupils to check the learning objectives they have achieved and to identify the next steps required to maintain their progress.
- Time in lessons is used effectively. Pupils pay good attention and follow instructions

appropriately. Little time is wasted through lack of attention or distracting behaviour. Teachers circulate to check on pupils' learning and regularly feed back to them orally about how to improve their work. Pupils in English, for example, manage their writing and research tasks independently while the teacher provides individual support and challenge through probing questioning and discussion.

- Teachers are aware of gaps in pupils' previous learning and they regularly provide individual tasks to make sure that each pupil is working at a level of challenge well matched to their personal needs. Pupils studying functional-skills mathematics discussed and supported each other as they worked through questions from previous examination papers.
- Teachers use questioning and oral presentation skills very effectively. They engage pupils successfully in discussion, and encourage them continuously to develop the depth and accuracy of their answers. Pupils demonstrated effective use of prior knowledge when discussing the impact of mental health in sport and fitness, and when planning a personal-fitness programme in science.
- Pupils have extensive opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. They are encouraged to offer personal opinions and to justify their choices and decisions. Teachers respect the views of pupils and encourage their peers to listen critically to the ideas of others. Pupils in personal and social development considered their self-image and the factors which influence it. They maintained reflective discussion, supporting and questioning each other, following the patient and sensitive guidance of their teacher.
- Teachers are quick to identify misunderstandings and errors in pupils' classwork. They ensure that pupils correct their mistakes and demonstrate a secure understanding, before they agree that a learning objective has been achieved.
- Pupils' reading and comprehension skills are generally stronger than the quality of their written answers. Pupils demonstrate the ability to develop reasoned arguments and to justify their ideas orally. However, they do not all commit to disciplined, grammatically accurate writing or to the responsibility to improve their work in response to feedback from teachers. The school does not have a well-developed, whole-school approach to the development of writing skills.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop their imagination and creativity and to apply these in practical tasks, for example in art. Pupils produced creative ideas as they developed individual themes using various media and techniques. They responded positively to the ideas and demonstrations provided by their teacher.
- Pupils in vocational subjects took care and worked with precision, for example, when cutting out a butt hinge in carpentry. They followed the demonstration provided by their teacher and worked with care and attention to detail in their safe use of appropriate tools and equipment.
- Staff challenge any inappropriate language or derogatory remarks from pupils. They promote the use of appropriate language sensitively and in a way which elicits a positive response from pupils.
- Staff promote equality and diversity, for example by using well-chosen resources which illustrate a range of gender and racial images in a variety of everyday settings. Pupils, in discussion, mostly respond with acceptance and celebration of diversity.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Many pupils have had negative previous experiences of school and lack self-confidence and motivation as a result. Staff place a high priority on the successful re-engagement of pupils, and mostly achieve this through the quality of relationships and care throughout the school.
- Many pupils develop pride in their work and surprise themselves with their successes. They develop trust in the staff and cooperate well throughout the school day. Attitudes to learning mostly improve from indifference to willing participation. This varies from taking on responsibilities in the school kitchen or workshops to volunteering to take a leading role in aspects of teaching.
- Most pupils learn to listen well and to respond positively to the views of others. For example, discussion about sensitive aspects of personal development and behaviour benefits from the personal experiences of pupils shared freely with their peers.
- The culture of care and commitment to the personal development of pupils enables them to achieve emotional stability and positive attitudes to learning. These pupils demonstrate good achievement across a range of subjects.
- Pupils' positive actions in making career choices, and taking appropriate actions to secure these, demonstrate their increasing maturity and confidence.
- Pupils are safe in school. In personal development lessons, they feel secure enough to speak honestly about challenges and negative experiences in their personal lives. They value the willingness of staff to listen and to encourage positive responses from their peers.
- Staff encourage pupils to develop a deeper knowledge of risks to which they may be exposed. They work effectively with individual pupils to seek and apply solutions which contribute to healthier lifestyles. The school places a strong emphasis on physical and mental-health well-being, within the curriculum and through personalised work with individuals and families.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. While their behaviour during lessons is good, the irregular attendance of too many pupils affects their opportunity to make consistently good progress with their learning. Some pupils improve their attendance compared with their previous experience. However, too many pupils are persistently absent.
- Senior leaders are diligent in the implementation of rigorous attendance procedures and records. No absence is ignored, and prompt daily contact is made with the parents or carers of any absentee. Similarly, the school works closely with referring schools and with officers of the local authority to engage with individual pupils and their families.
- The improvement of attendance is one of the priorities in the school improvement plan. The school's strategies to improve attendance include long-term plans regarding school

sites and transport arrangements which will take time to implement successfully. In the meantime, senior leaders commit considerable energy and resources to continued development of strategies with their educational partners to tackle this issue.

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. The majority of pupils follow instructions and cooperate well with staff. Most lessons start punctually, and pupils are prepared to settle quickly into learning activities. Pupils' willingness to engage in discussion and to work cooperatively with each other and with their teachers contribute to an effective learning environment.
- Staff give appropriate attention to any use of inappropriate language. Pupils demonstrate respect for their peers and cooperation is generally good. Bullying is rare as staff are alert to any disagreements or potential falling out between pupils. Most pupils respond positively to the school's restorative approach to resolving conflicts. Staff intervene promptly and implement alternative arrangements for grouping pupils if necessary.
- Many pupils make strong improvements in their behaviour and readiness to learn compared with their record in previous settings. In the short time since the school opened, most pupils have developed appropriate respect for the community values of the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Most pupils are working at standards below the age-related expectations, mostly due to time out of school and a disrupted educational experience prior to entry.
- The school assesses pupils' starting points accurately on entry to the school. Where information from previous settings is available, this is also considered in determining pupils' individual educational needs. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress against criteria established for each subject. These assessments are mostly based on the specifications and standards required to achieve functional-skills qualifications between entry level 3 and level 2.
- It is too early to judge pupils' long-term progress and final outcomes, as no pupils have yet entered for external qualifications. Teachers' assessments and pupils' work to date indicate that several pupils are on track to achieve their external qualifications. The most able pupils in Years 9 and 10 are working at standards appropriate for entry to GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11.
- Pupils who attend regularly mostly make good progress in English and mathematics, from their individual starting points. This is achieved through the effective reinforcement and extension of previous knowledge and skills. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) begin to close gaps in their previous learning and make good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in a range of practical and vocational subjects. Pupils are working successfully towards external accreditations, including BTEC Level 1 awards in subjects such as art, sport and fitness, science, personal and social development and food studies. Pupils leaving at the end of Year 11 are also working towards college placements or employment with training in a variety of trades, including carpentry and construction.
- Attainment overall is relatively low but shows good progress towards the standards required for access to post-16 further education courses. The majority of current Year 11

pupils have already gained places or made applications for places in further education.

School details

Unique reference number	145932
DfE registration number	925/6009
Inspection number	10078682

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	Other independent school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	13 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Number of part-time pupils	23
Proprietor	Chris Jones
Chair	Chris Jones
Headteacher	Adam Webb
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40 to £125 per day
Telephone number	01507 524015
Website	www.build-a-future.com
Email address	adam@build-a-future.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Build-a-Future Independent School is located on two sites in Lincolnshire. These sites, at West Ashby, near Horncastle, and Hubbert's Bridge, near Boston, are approximately 20 miles apart.
- The school is registered to provide full-time education for up to 125 pupils aged 13 to 16 years. There are currently 83 pupils on roll. This includes 23 pupils who attend part-time and who are jointly registered at their placing schools.
- Pupils attending the school have social, emotional and mental-health conditions, a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder and associated behavioural difficulties. The school

provides for pupils who are excluded, or at risk of exclusion, from mainstream schools.

- The school does not use the services of any alternative providers.
- The proprietor has recently established a governing body. The first meeting of the governing body is planned for the summer term 2019.
- The school opened in September 2018 and this was its first standard Ofsted inspection. There have been no Year 11 leavers to date.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning at both sites, across the full age-range of the school. He scrutinised samples of pupils' work in a variety of subjects and discussed pupils' work and progress with teachers of English and mathematics.
- The inspector held discussions about oversight and accountability of the school with the proprietor and one member of the recently-established governing body. He discussed all aspects of leadership and management and the implementation of school policies with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- The inspector considered a small number of responses to Ofsted's Parent View online questionnaire, together with responses to a recent internal school questionnaire submitted by 28 parents and carers. In addition, he held informal discussions with a number of pupils.
- The inspector scrutinised several school policies, procedures and records to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

David Young, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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