

# Impact Independent School

102 Birmingham Road, Dudley DY1 4RF

## Inspection dates

30 April–2 May 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The leadership team has systematically addressed all the weaknesses noted in the previous inspection. They have ensured that all the independent school standards are met; as a result, pupils make good progress.
- The framework for assessment works well. Consequently, pupils who fall behind are quickly identified and are supported to catch up. However, leaders do not yet gauge the impact of interventions to ensure that they are the most effective for every pupil.
- Leaders forge positive relationships with parents and carers who are delighted with the progress their children make in their behaviour.
- Leaders have created an extremely caring environment where pupils who have had difficulties in other schools now regulate their behaviour and commit themselves to learning.
- The curriculum provides a good balance of subjects. Consequently, pupils develop a wide range of knowledge and skills.
- Teaching in mathematics has improved greatly since the previous inspection. Pupils now make strong progress in this subject and most say that they really enjoy mathematics.
- Some members of the new strategic leadership group do not have a secure understanding of the independent school standards.
- Skilled and experienced teachers ensure that lessons challenge and support all pupils, including the most able. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Pupils do not develop strong enough skills in the use of different forms of language. Teachers do not expect pupils to give full enough spoken responses. Consequently, progress in this aspect of learning is limited.
- Most aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are taught well. Pupils have a good understanding of British values. However, pupils have only a basic knowledge of world religions.

### 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?

- Ensure that leaders evaluate the impact of interventions to provide the most effective ways to support learning for all pupils.
- Ensure that all members of the strategic leadership group have a secure knowledge of the independent school standards.
- Improve teaching by ensuring that:
  - pupils routinely express their thinking in full responses, using clear spoken language
  - pupils understand appropriate ways to use different forms of language, for example formal and informal language.
- Build on the good progress pupils make in their personal development to ensure that they develop a greater understanding of world religions.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders have ensured that all independent school standards are met.
- Since the previous inspection, the established and highly effective leadership team has systematically addressed the issues outlined in the inspection report. They have a clear vision of what they want for the school and make plans toward meeting these goals. Leaders know the school's strengths and know what needs to improve. As a result, they have made many positive changes that have led to better outcomes for pupils.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced with an appropriate range of opportunities for pupils to learn. As a result, pupils develop knowledge and skills in English, mathematics, science, history, citizenship, physical education, creative arts and personal, health, social and economic (PHSE) education.
- Leaders are skilled at recruiting good-quality staff. This ability has resulted in the employment of a team of experienced, skilled and able teachers and learning support staff. Consequently, pupils are well supported to make progress in both their personal and academic development.
- The school's framework for assessment is very effective. A new software programme is being used well by leaders and staff. This is having a positive effect on the school's ability to use and evaluate its assessment information about pupils' progress.
- Leaders have established good relationships with other agencies that support the school, for example with social services, the police and child and adolescent mental health services and with personnel in the pupils' home schools. These close links enable fast responses to the needs of pupils.
- Leaders create good relationships with parents, who are very pleased with the progress that their children make following difficulties in mainstream schools. Parents appreciate the detailed termly reports on their children's progress. They are also pleased with the effect that their children's improved behaviour has on relationships at home.
- Staff morale is high. All members of staff spoken with during the inspection said that they really enjoy working in the school and find it rewarding. They work very well as a team and say it is like being in a supportive family. They appreciate the many opportunities they have for continuing professional development. The close relationships between leaders and staff ensure that pupils benefit from the warmth of a supportive ethos.
- Leaders consistently promote the British values of tolerance and respect. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements of the school's curriculum are taught well through the PHSE education programme.
- Leaders are skilled and knowledgeable in judging the quality of teaching. They have introduced a strong performance management programme for monitoring teaching and learning. This programme has had a positive effect and, as a consequence, outcomes for pupils have improved.
- A recently introduced and effective appraisal programme ensures that staff develop their skills so that they can take on further responsibilities. Consequently, they are highly motivated to perform well, and their improved skills have a positive impact on pupils'

development and progress.

- A strong programme of professional development supports teachers to improve. They benefit from regular opportunities for further training. Impact Independent School is held in high regard by local mainstream schools for its work with vulnerable pupils.
- Leaders have created an extremely caring environment where pupils who have had significant difficulties in other schools are able to grow in confidence. Pupils develop a good knowledge of themselves and are therefore able to commit themselves to learning.
- The strategic leadership group is relatively new. The group has an advisory and supporting role, like that of a governing body. The group supports and challenges leaders and staff. It has conducted one review that has been helpful to the school in its journey towards sustained improvement. However, those who are part of this group do not all have a good knowledge of the independent school standards. As a result, the support of this group is currently limited.
- Leaders use the information they collect about the progress of pupils to make decisions about how to support them to improve. They hold monthly pupil progress meetings to identify the needs of those who are falling behind. They put in place interventions that are designed to support these pupils to improve. However, the effectiveness of the evaluation of interventions is at an early stage and is not yet strong enough to determine which are most successful.

## **Governance**

- The school does not have a governing body. As stated above, a newly established strategic leadership group has been established to support and challenge leaders and staff.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and all staff have a strong understanding of how to safeguard the pupils in their care. Consequently, pupils are safe and well supported.
- An up-to-date safeguarding policy that meets government requirements is provided to parents on request. All staff are well trained in every aspect of safeguarding and are kept fully aware of any issues that affect the safety of pupils. Staff are well trained to recognise the warning signs of radicalisation, extremism or female genital mutilation.
- Those responsible for safeguarding are suitably trained. They ensure that all records are thorough and kept securely. They have a strong knowledge of a wide range of child protection issues.
- Pupils interviewed and those who completed questionnaires all said that they feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including online and when using social media.
- The school premises are safe for pupils. Regular checks are made for hazards and fire risks. Staff who are responsible for making these checks are diligent and keep thorough records.
- Leaders are well trained in safer recruitment and take great care when recruiting staff. They make all the required pre-employment checks to ensure that staff are suitable to

work with children and young people.

- Leaders make all appropriate risk assessments for the safety of the building and for outside education and visits. Leaders also ensure that they undertake risk assessments for individual pupils.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teachers are highly experienced, with secure subject knowledge. They are skilled in supporting pupils to fill gaps in their learning. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- The experience of teachers in managing behaviour ensures that all pupils engage positively most of the time. Pupils show a high level of respect for their teachers. Consequently, pupils develop positive attitudes to their learning.
- Teachers ensure that they know the needs of their pupils extremely well. They routinely encourage pupils to revisit learning from previous lessons to consolidate their understanding and move on to new learning. Teachers provide tasks that successfully extend pupils' learning. They also ensure that they meet the needs of pupils with different abilities, so they become confident learners.
- Teachers encourage the most able pupils to work independently. Consequently, they develop their own strategies to organise their work.
- Teachers and support assistants encourage and facilitate effective discussion among pupils. For example, pupils work in pairs to annotate English work with quotations from the text. Good-quality questioning by teachers and learning support assistants prompts and extends pupils' thinking skills. The interaction between staff and pupils deepens pupils' understanding.
- Learning support assistants use skilful questioning to encourage pupils to work out meanings for themselves when reading. As a result, pupils gradually build self-confidence and become less dependent on adults when reading.
- The teaching of mathematics is strong. Pupils make good progress as they move from the security of what they already know to tasks that challenge them to attempt harder work. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and use this to develop pupils' mathematical fluency and problem-solving skills. As a result, pupils develop confidence in the subject and all say that they really enjoy mathematics.
- Pupils do not extend their use of technical vocabulary well enough. Teachers encourage the learning of new words in all lessons across the curriculum, especially the technical words that are important for particular subjects. However, they frequently accept one-word answers from pupils and the pupils do not learn to use these new words in sentences. As a result, this aspect of learning is limited.
- Teachers do not develop pupils' understanding and use of formal language sufficiently. Pupils use informal language in their talk in lessons and teachers do not ensure that they learn to use more formal language often enough. As a result, pupils have little understanding of the appropriate use of language in different situations. In their study of Shakespeare, for example, they do not understand the use of archaic language. This prevents them from fully understanding the Shakespearean texts that they study for their examinations.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils develop more confidence as they spend more time in the school. A typical comment from a pupil to the inspector was: 'The teachers here really help you. They care about you and want you to do well.' This developing confidence ensures that pupils settle down quickly to learning and make good progress.
- Pastoral support for pupils and their families is strong. Pastoral staff make home visits to discuss issues with pupils and their parents. The school also provides one-to-one mentoring when this is needed. Mental health professionals come into school regularly to support pupils. The school works well with a variety of other agencies in the interests of the pupils. As a result, they are well supported with any personal difficulties or mental health issues.
- All adults in the school are involved in teaching pupils to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations and when online. Pupils learn about personal safety in PHSE education lessons and in Friday assemblies where teachers have informal discussions with them about issues such as alcohol abuse, knife-crime, extremism and online safety. Pupils say that they know that they should not talk to strangers on social media and that carrying a knife is dangerous to themselves as well as to others. They know how to lead healthy lifestyles by eating well and taking plenty of exercise.
- The school's PHSE education programme supports pupils to develop a strong understanding of British values. They are clear about equality and say: 'You should respect others even if they are different.' They are confident that everyone is treated equally in school.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils helps to improve pupils' relationships and understanding of the community and the world. Pupils have taken part in fundraising events for charities where, for example, they washed cars or printed T-shirts to sell. They have also prepared food boxes for homeless people. Consequently, their horizons are widened, and they learn about how they can support others in the local and wider community.
- All staff support pupils well to develop their social skills. They encourage them to listen to others and to consider the views of others in disagreements. Staff and pupils regularly go to restaurants to eat together so that pupils learn how to behave in public. Consequently, their social skills improve.
- Pupils are very positive about the careers advice and support that they receive on college choices. Careers education is taught by visitors to the school as well as in PHSE education lessons and college taster days. Staff also take pupils to visit the skills fair at the National Exhibition Centre. Pupils feel that they have had good support in choosing their next steps.
- All pupils have had some valuable work experience in the school allotment where they make and design their own garden. The allotment gives them opportunities to work in teams and to develop independent thinking. They have also worked with a company to design and make strong chicken coops to ensure that the chickens housed at the

allotment are safe.

- Pupils learn about different religions in PHSE education lessons. They have a basic but limited understanding of a variety of different religions. Consequently, they do not know enough about the different religious beliefs of people they will meet in modern Britain when they enter the world of work.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy their leisure time, relate well to one another and show respect for adults. They are courteous and friendly to visitors. They move swiftly back to class at the end of breaktimes.
- Pupils understand the behaviour code well, with the result that lessons are rarely disturbed by incidents of poor behaviour. Good relationships exist between pupils and staff during lessons. They treat each other with mutual respect.
- The school keeps detailed records of behaviour patterns, both positive and negative, and analyses them to support pupils. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with appropriately where necessary by detentions or fixed-term exclusions from school. These incidents become fewer as the pupils settle into school and realise that they can enjoy and concentrate on learning and they are safe.
- Pupils are motivated to behave well by the school's use of good behaviour points. They accumulate points that lead to rewards and certificates. Staff inform parents when they are particularly pleased with a pupil's behaviour. One parent commented, reflecting the views of most, that her child is very happy at the school and has become 'a much calmer person'.
- The vast majority of pupils have either good or steadily improving attendance. Some of these pupils have had long periods of absence from other schools. The school works exceptionally hard to improve the attendance of the minority who attend less regularly. This improved attendance has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- The vast majority of pupils in all year groups make strong progress in their behaviour and personal development. This is because of the caring school ethos and the behaviour management skills of all staff, as well as the clear expectations of behaviour.
- The vast majority of pupils in key stage 4 make good progress from their starting points in mathematics, English and science. This is because teachers create positive working relationships with their pupils. Their strong subject knowledge and skills have a significant impact on pupils' desire to learn and make progress.
- The main purpose of the provision at key stage 3 is to support pupils to improve their behaviour and engagement with learning over a six-week period. From September 2017 to the present, most of the key stage 3 pupils have successfully reintegrated into their mainstream schools after the six-week period. A minority stay for a further six weeks or remain at Impact Independent School.
- The vast majority of pupils in key stage 3 make good progress from their starting points in English and mathematics. This is because teachers identify specific learning needs and

provide challenging and interesting tasks that engage and motivate the pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy their work, particularly in mathematics lessons.

- The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities mirrors that for all pupils, given their starting points. This is because their progress is tracked accurately, and interventions are put in place when needed.
- Pupils have good opportunities to read in all lessons. They begin to be able to read more independently because teachers and support teachers teach reading well.
- As a result of the good progress that pupils make in both personal development and academic learning, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The strong careers advice that pupils receive also prepares them effectively. In July 2018 most of the Year 11 pupils went on to further education, apprenticeships or work placements.

## School details

Unique reference number	141560
DfE registration number	332/6010
Inspection number	10093008

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 school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Impact Education and Training Ltd
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	Terry Breen/Jo Blackhouse
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65 per day
Telephone number	0121 5022645
Website	N/A
Email address	<a href="mailto:jobblackhouse@impactededucation.org.uk">jobblackhouse@impactededucation.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	3–5 May 2017

## Information about this school

- Impact Independent School is on a single site in Dudley, West Midlands. It is registered with the Department for Education (DfE) to provide full-time education for up to 80 pupils.
- In 2018 the school had a material change inspection so that it was able to move to the present site and to increase the number of pupils on roll.
- This was the school's second standard inspection since it became registered with the DfE in November 2014. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors over three days.
- The school is used as alternative provision by secondary schools in the local area. Pupils

remain on roll with their mainstream school but receive their full-time education at Impact Independent School.

- The school uses Dudley Leisure Centre, 89A Wellington Road, Dudley; Portway Lifestyle Centre, Newbury Lane, Oldbury and Leap Dudley Limited, 84 Birmingham Road, Dudley for physical education. It also uses Farm Road Allotment in Oldbury for gardening and creative education.
- The school admits pupils in Years 8, 9, 10 and 11 who are at risk of permanent exclusion from their mainstream school. These pupils may be underachieving, or need social and emotional support, or find that a mainstream school is not an appropriate setting.
- The aim of the school is to 'transform the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable young people through the fundamental building block that is education'.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 10 lessons. Some of these lessons were jointly observed by the executive headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at assessment information about pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science, as well as scrutinising a range of pupils' work in books and some of their art work.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and a variety of other staff. Inspectors also spoke to a group of pupils and individual pupils over the course of the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents and policies, including records of observations of teaching, safeguarding documents, behaviour records and records of attendance.
- Inspectors looked at questionnaires completed by pupils at the school, as well as questionnaires completed by pupils who left in July 2018.
- There were no responses to the Parent View questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke to several parents on the telephone and spoke to two representatives of Sandwell local authority who are involved with the pupils who are placed in alternative provision at the school.
- A check of the premises was carried out, including the facilities provided for pupils.

## Inspection team

Mary Maybank, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Michael Onyon

Ofsted Inspector

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