

# Inspection of Bloomfield School

178 Bloomfield Road, Tipton, West Midlands DY4 9ER

---

Inspection dates: 29 June–1 July 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

---

The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**No**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Bloomfield School are not getting a good education. They are not prepared well enough for life beyond school. Pupils are not supported well to develop independence. They are dependent on staff unlocking doors, so that they can move around school. Pupils do not attend school as often as they should. Attendance is not improving.

There have been several changes of headteacher since the last inspection, and until recently the proprietor has not kept a close enough eye on the school. While pupils are kept safe in the school, some of the school's practices can put them at potential risk of harm.

The new leadership team is working hard to bring about improvements to the school. Staff and pupils say that the school is now a better place to be in than before. Pupils' behaviour, while not good enough, is getting better. Staff and pupils have good relationships. While there are instances of bullying, pupils say that these are sorted out by staff.

Quite a few staff have left the school recently. Leaders are recruiting new staff, but currently pupils cannot study as many different subjects as they should. Reading is not a priority in the school, and it should be. Staff do not have an accurate picture of what pupils can and cannot do.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The school's curriculum is poorly planned. In almost all subjects, content has not been mapped out in a sensible order to enable pupils to build on their knowledge. Subject content is narrowed. Lessons tend to be planned in isolation, so pupils find it difficult to make connections with what they have learned, or to revisit concepts. Pupils' poor attendance, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, means that teachers have to keep revisiting lesson content. This is because pupils are not remembering what they have learned.

Leaders do not have a clear approach to assessment in all subjects to help them get an accurate understanding of pupils' abilities. Pupils are not getting the right help to improve their basic literacy and numeracy skills because lessons are poorly planned. This prevents pupils from making progress and achieving well. Reading is not promoted in the school, and pupils told inspectors that they do not read very often. Leaders do not know how well pupils can read, so cannot put the right level of support in place.

Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are too low. Because so few pupils attend the school, there are plenty of staff available to help pupils. Often, staff give the pupils too much help, such as telling pupils what to write, or letting them copy sentences. Pupils are not becoming resilient learners.

Overall, pupils' behaviour is improving. Pupils behave well in lessons when they are given interesting work that is matched to their abilities. But too often this is not the case.

Staff do not get enough support for their professional development and are often teaching subjects that they have not been trained to teach. Staff's written comments in pupils' workbooks show that good spelling and grammar are not being modelled consistently well.

Leaders recognise that pupils have had limited opportunities to gain qualifications. While pupils have been entered for GCSEs in English and mathematics, other qualifications are only available to study at lower levels. As a result, pupils are not having the chance to achieve the level of qualification of which they are capable.

The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision are getting a much better deal. They are studying suitable qualifications and are attending and engaging well.

Pupils' personal development is hampered by the poorly planned and narrow personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. The content neither addresses the teaching of safeguarding and healthy relationships well enough nor focuses on pupils' specific vulnerabilities or special educational needs. Pupils' understanding of extremism, radicalisation, and discrimination such as homophobia is weak because they have not been taught about these.

Teachers provide pupils with limited opportunities to develop their social and cultural understanding of the world, and fundamental British values are not actively promoted. Pupils have a limited understanding of civil and criminal law, public institutions, and other cultures, because the curriculum does not afford them a wide and rich set of experiences.

Locked doors around the school, including to the pupils' toilets and the 'quiet room', do not enable pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour, or prepare them for their next steps. As one pupil commented, 'I just want to be trusted.' Leaders have not ensured that all pupils from Year 8 are being given independent careers advice and guidance.

The proprietor has spent much time dealing with a significant number of complaints received about the school. The proprietor and leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are consistently and continually met. Some unmet standards identified at the last monitoring inspection remain unmet.

New leaders are determined to make improvements to the school and have begun to successfully address some safeguarding failings and to improve pupils' behaviour. Some recent curriculum development work is beginning to show signs of improvement and leaders have stated their intent for further improvements next term. However, there is significant work to do. They have not fully evaluated the quality of education provided for pupils. Pupils' specific special educational needs are

not being identified well enough, so they are not getting the right support. A small number of pupils are not getting their statutory entitlement to a full-time education. Leaders' capacity to bring about improvements is also hampered by the lack of a stable, well-trained staff team.

In the last two years, leaders have not made sure that pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans have been reviewed annually. New leaders have tried to work quickly to address this, but not all pupils have had their reviews completed within statutory timeframes. Pupils do not get support to plan for transition in a timely way.

Leaders have made sure that their safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. However, there are other statutory obligations that have not been met. The school's accessibility plan is not suitable as it does not address how to improve access to the school's environment or to written materials. Leaders had not complied with the statutory guidance on relationships, sex, and health education. However, during the inspection they began to take steps to rectify this.

By the end of the inspection, leaders had taken the decision to remove locks from internal fire doors and unlock pupils' toilets and the 'quiet room'.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. While leaders respond quickly to serious safeguarding concerns, they do not have a good enough oversight of pupils' welfare. Records are disorganised and some information has not been transferred from leaders' own notes to pupils' files. Leaders are not tenacious in their follow-up of actions. As a result, patterns of concern may be missed. Leaders do not always ensure that pupils have a new school to attend before they are taken off roll.

Leaders have ensured that staff have received additional training in safeguarding. Physical interventions are now accurately recorded. Pupils are helped to reflect on incidents.

## **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Leaders have not ensured that they have sufficient oversight of pupils' welfare and safeguarding concerns. Records are poorly organised and some information from leaders' personal notes has not been transferred to pupils' files. As a result, there is a risk that leaders will not be able to identify any emerging patterns of concern. Leaders began to address this during the inspection. Leaders should continue their actions to ensure that all concerns are recorded in pupils' files, kept centrally, so that they have a clear chronology of incidents. They should follow up any welfare information in a timely way.
- At the time of the inspection, several internal fire doors were locked by a key, and alarm call points were operated by a key. In the event of fire, pupils are reliant on

staff raising the alarm and unlocking doors to ensure that pupils can safely leave the building. During the inspection, the proprietor took the decision to remove the locks from the internal fire doors. After the inspection, leaders provided a fire risk assessment of another school in the group that they assert is applicable to all Horizon Care school sites, relating to the approved use of alarm call points. The proprietor and leaders should ensure that an up-to-date fire risk assessment of Bloomfield School is undertaken so that they can assure themselves that fire arrangements are acceptable.

- The curriculum is poorly planned and does not provide a suitable breadth of subjects for pupils to study. As a result, learning is not sequenced well, and does not enable pupils to build on their prior knowledge. The development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is weak. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in each subject is well planned, considering pupils' specific needs and abilities, so that pupils learn more and remember more over time.
- There is no whole-school framework for assessment. Consequently, staff do not have an accurate understanding of pupils' abilities and cannot plan effectively to ensure that pupils are getting the right support. Leaders should develop a whole-school framework for assessment, so that accurate information can be gathered about pupils' abilities and used to inform teachers' planning.
- Attendance is low and is not improving, so pupils are missing out on learning. Leaders should take steps to secure good attendance from all pupils and ensure that any pupils on part-time timetables have appropriate support, and a plan to return them to full-time education.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) understanding, and knowledge of fundamental British values, are limited. Pupils do not receive appropriate independent careers advice and guidance. Staff do too much for pupils. All of these weaknesses are hindering pupils' personal development and independence and do not prepare them well for life in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum enables pupils to develop their full understanding of British values, enhance their SMSC development and independence, and receive appropriate careers advice and guidance from Year 8.
- The proprietor and leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met continually and consistently. They should work to address all the unmet standards in the parts outlined, to meet their statutory responsibilities.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135518
<b>DfE registration number</b>	333/6004
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	10193314
<b>Type of school</b>	Independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	16
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	1
<b>Proprietor</b>	Horizon Care and Education Group Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Callander
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fiona Hims
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£39,936 to £92,157
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 5209408
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.horizoncare.co.uk">www.horizoncare.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:enquiries@horizoncare.co.uk">enquiries@horizoncare.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4–6 June 2019

## Information about this school

- Bloomfield School is an independent special school that caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. It is one of nine schools in the Horizon Care and Education Group Ltd. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- Bloomfield School's previous standard inspection took place in July 2019, when its overall effectiveness was judged to be good. An emergency inspection of the school took place in November 2020, following several complaints. The school was judged to not be meeting all the independent school standards that were checked.
- Since the last standard inspection, there have been several changes in the proprietary group and in the school's leadership team. The school has been led by four different headteachers. Two of these have acted in an interim capacity.
- A small number of pupils attend two unregistered work providers.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the school's pastoral leader. The lead inspector met with Horizon Care's managing director for education. Inspectors met with staff, and several pupils at the school. An inspector visited a pupil at their alternative provision and spoke to another alternative provider on the telephone. The lead inspector spoke to two officers from Sandwell local authority, and had email communications with Horizon's school improvement partner and a representative from Walsall local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents during the inspection. These included: school policies, safeguarding records, health and safety records, curriculum documents, leaders' monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education, the school's single central record, staff training records, and pupils' behaviour, attendance and exclusion records.
- The lead inspector conducted a tour of the premises, accompanied by the deputy headteacher and the site manager, to check compliance with the independent school standards.



- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes, and talked to pupils informally about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- Inspectors focused on the following subjects during the inspection: English, mathematics, PSHE and food technology. As part of the focus, they met with subject leaders and class teachers and talked to pupils. Inspectors visited lessons, sometimes accompanied by senior leaders, and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the 12 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. There were no responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors considered one parental response made to the region via telephone. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Deb Jenkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Julie Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

Christopher Stevens

Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school failed to meet the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
  - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
  - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
    - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–
  - 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
  - 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
  - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which–
    - 2(2)(d)(i) reflects the school’s aim and ethos; and
    - 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act[9];
  - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that–
    - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
    - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
    - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential;
  - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress; and
  - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
  - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
  - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;

- 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
  - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
  - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
  - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
  - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
  - 3(i) does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

## **Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor–
- 5(a) actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
  - 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which–
  - 5(b)(i) enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
  - 5(b)(ii) enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England;
  - 5(b)(iii) encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely;
  - 5(b)(iv) enable pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England;
  - 5(b)(v) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;
  - 5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act; and

- 5(b)(vii) encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England;
- 5(c) precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school; and
- 5(d) takes such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils–
  - 5(d)(i) while they are in attendance at the school,
  - 5(d)(ii) while they are taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organised by or on behalf of the school, or
  - 5(d)(iii) in the promotion at the school, including through the distribution of promotional material, of extra-curricular activities taking place at the school or elsewhere
 they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
  - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[12].

### **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

### **Part 6. Provision of information**

- 32(1)(i) where a pupil with an EHC plan wholly or partly funded by a local authority or other body through public funds is registered at the school, such information as may reasonably be required for the purpose of the annual review of the EHC plan is provided to the responsible local authority.

## **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

## **Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010**

- The school's accessibility plan is not suitable. While it addresses pupils' access to the curriculum, there is no reference to how the environment or written information will be made more accessible.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2021