

# Inspection of ES Independent School Kirklees

20 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4EN

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Inspection dates:

30 November to 2 December 2021

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## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent  
school standards?

**Yes**

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

Pupils told inspectors that ES Independent School does not feel like a school, more like a family. Pupils also told inspectors that staff respected their views and 'had their back' when they needed help and support.

School leaders' motto is that they should never give up on a young person, no matter how hard it may seem. Leaders also believe that all pupils can be successful if they find the right pathway. Last year, six pupils left the school. All remain successfully in the placements they chose, despite the difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pupils report that there is little bullying within school. School records show that a small number of incidents are recorded. Pupils behave well despite their high levels of need. School records also show that staff have never needed to use a physical intervention to control a pupil's behaviour. The calm atmosphere in school evidences this well.

During the inspection, three parents dropped into school to speak to the inspectors. All wanted to say how much the school has done for their sons and daughters. Comments included: 'My son's behaviour has changed at home as well as at school,' and 'My son is excited about his future. School has helped him to work out what his next steps are.' The views of these parents show the change in their children's attitudes, behaviour and future hopes since joining the school.

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

Currently, pupils are all in key stage 4. Most are in Year 11. Many have been at the school for less than a year. School leaders believe that everyone can succeed. This is reflected in the broad curriculum offered at the school. Links with a wide variety of organisations enable pupils to access a wide range of career choices. For example, pupils visit a local garage to learn about car maintenance. A small health and beauty salon is based in school. This offers pupils opportunities to learn how to administer beauty therapies. A pupil who is a talented artist is currently being mentored by a tattoo studio. This experience is helping him to realise his ambition to become a tattoo artist.

Leaders are justifiably proud that all six pupils who left the school last year remain at the placements they chose and continue to receive training or further education.

The key stage 4 pupils currently present in the school also study mathematics, English, science, personal, social and health education (PSHE), humanities and art. Overall, subjects are well planned and learning is sequenced to ensure that pupils build on previous learning. Gaps in learning are identified and addressed for individual pupils.

The newly introduced science curriculum is the exception. Pupils study for unitary awards. This makes it difficult to identify pupils' starting and end points. It also does not allow learning to be sequenced as the units chosen for pupils to study are not

linked well. Gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are also not as clearly identified as in other subject areas.

School is a calm and welcoming place. Pupils often arrive at the school late in their school careers. Many have missed more than a year of education. School leaders recognise the issues that pupils face and are determined to ensure that pupils have a second chance to succeed. Staff treat pupils with courtesy and respect. Posters around the school remind pupils how much they are cared for and are part of the school community. Pupils nearly always settle quickly and start to learn how to regulate their own behaviour. Behaviour in lessons is generally calm. Pupils want to learn and recognise the need to work hard to catch up. When behavioural incidents do occur, they are dealt with effectively by staff. The proprietor does not believe in excluding pupils, so no exclusions have taken place since the school opened. Staff are not trained in physical interventions so none are carried out.

Incidents of difficult behaviour are logged and appropriate action is taken to ensure that pupils learn how to manage their behaviour. However, leaders do not yet analyse incidents in sufficient depth and detail. This is a missed opportunity to gather information to improve pupils' behaviour further.

Staff often go above and beyond expectations to support pupils. During lockdown, school staff changed their working hours in order to support pupils more effectively in the evening. A key priority for staff and leaders is developing confidence and resilience. Supporting pupils to make decisions about their future is a key component of the key stage 4 curriculum.

As well as a small beauty salon school, leaders have recently taken over a café across the road from the school. Pupils currently take turns to prepare lunchtime meals. Plans are also in place to open the café to the public so that pupils can gain experience in the catering industry.

Pupils learn about other cultures and religions by visiting places of worship and through debate and discussion in school.

The PSHE curriculum helps pupils learn how to recognise inappropriate behaviour in others. They also learn the impact of their own behaviour on others. This includes discussions on issues including healthy relationships and sexual consent.

The school ensures that pupils have access to an independent careers adviser, who offers pupils information, advice and guidance. School leaders are also planning to increase the independent guidance for pupils by training and appointing an in-house careers guidance lead.

The school proprietor takes a hands-on approach to the leadership and management of the school. This enables the proprietor to have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and to set appropriate targets to bring about improvement.

Staff say that they feel well supported by the leadership team. They know that they can ask for help if their workload is too heavy. They also appreciate the mental health support they are offered through Well-being Wednesdays.

## **Safeguarding**

The school's safeguarding policy is on the company's website and makes reference to the latest government guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021. The school has trained three designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) for the school. This ensures that there is a DSL on site at all times.

Leaders make sure that school is a safe place for all pupils. Staff work closely with other agencies to ensure that pupils in need receive the relevant help they need.

At the time of the inspection, a new system had very recently been put in place to record safeguarding information. Records were in two places as data was transferred. However, data was safe when files were scrutinised.

Leaders were also clear about safer recruitment processes. Records showed that all staff had been subject to the correct and relevant checks before their employment had begun.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

- The school delivers a broad curriculum, designed to meet the needs of the current cohort of Year 11 pupils. Most subjects in the curriculum are sequenced to allow pupils to build on their knowledge and skills. The exception is science, where the curriculum does not allow pupils to develop knowledge and skills sequentially. This is because the curriculum currently delivered is in three single units which do not link. This approach reduces pupils' opportunities to study science at a higher level in the future. Science staff are not aware of pupils' starting points or gaps in their knowledge. Introducing a more structured curriculum alongside a system to check on pupils' current levels of understanding will enable school staff to tailor the science curriculum more carefully to individual pupils' needs. This would enable pupils to build on their previous knowledge and to learn and remember more.
- Incidents of difficult behaviour are logged by school leaders. Records are kept for each child. However, the information contained in the behaviour logs is not used for monitoring and evaluating behaviour incidents across the school. For example, at the time of the inspection, leaders were unsure of the exact number of incidents of difficult behaviour in the previous term. Information such as this can be used by leaders to monitor behaviour overall as well as to ascertain the underlying causes of difficult behaviour. School leaders agree that the current system does not record data effectively. They also accept that a system which logged behaviour by type and time would aid the development of a more effective approach to monitoring pupils' behaviour over time.

## How can I feed back my views?

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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>	148175
<b>DfE registration number</b>	382/6020
<b>Local authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	10202222
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent School
<b>School category</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	12
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Claire Cook
<b>Chair</b>	Claire Cook
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gayle Worswick
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£16,000 to £50,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01484 546842
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.employabilitysolutions.com">www.employabilitysolutions.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@employabilitysolutions.com">office@employabilitysolutions.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is situated in a large detached house within a conservation area near the centre of Huddersfield.
- This is the first inspection of the school.
- The school meets the needs of up to 60 pupils who are aged between 11 and 19.
- Many pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils also have additional needs, including autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and moderate learning difficulties.
- The school currently does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is operating within its registration agreed with the Department for Education.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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 meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in 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.

- The inspection team met with the proprietor, headteacher, curriculum lead, DSL and teaching staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, English, science and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team checked health and safety documents; documents relating to the school's fire evacuation policy; first-aid boxes, to check the contents; and staff certificates of attendance on first-aid courses.
- A tour of the building was carried out to check the school's compliance with part 5 of the independent school standards.

## **Inspection team**

Marian Thomas, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Suzette Garland-Grimes

Ofsted Inspector



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