

Inspection of Future First Independent School

Hockley Port, All Saints Street, Hockley, Birmingham, West Midlands B18 7RL

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Insufficient evidence

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a small school for pupils who have experienced difficulties in other settings. Staff are well meaning. They care about pupils and aim to develop positive relationships.

Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school. However, they do not attend regularly enough and miss too many lessons. This significantly limits their learning.

Pupils display negative attitudes towards learning. They do not engage well in lessons and often walk out of classes. This is because the curriculum is poorly planned and does not build on what pupils already know. Pupils rarely complete set tasks and so they do not achieve well.

Pupils who experience additional barriers to learning do not do as well as they could. Leaders have not trained staff well enough. Therefore, staff lack the skills to plan and adapt learning to meet pupils' needs.

Leaders say that bullying is not tolerated. However, pupils report unkind comments made as 'jokes' that upset them. Similarly, pupils aim derogatory and abusive language towards staff.

Pupils engage in unsafe behaviour. They do not respond to staff instructions or requests. Staff have not been trained to manage challenging behaviour. Therefore, pupils do not develop strategies to regulate their own emotions.

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

The small setting means that staff get to know pupils well. Staff try to plan learning linked to pupils' interests and hobbies. In doing so, however, they give pupils too much choice, and topic themes are often changed midway through at the request of pupils. This means that subjects are not studied in enough depth. As a result, pupils' learning is shallow and does not build on what they have learned before. The curriculum does not meet pupils' needs.

Teachers' subject knowledge is variable. Where this is stronger, for example in history, teachers are passionate about the content they would like to teach. However, this is not the case in other subjects, such as mathematics. In these curriculum areas, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They all have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Information in the plans is not used effectively. Staff do not consider the recommended strategies when planning learning. Leaders have not invested in the professional development of staff. Staff lack the expertise to adapt learning for pupils with SEND. This leads to pupils' disengagement, resulting in incomplete tasks and work.

The school's approach to teaching reading is not effective. Staff do not have the skills to teach reading. Resources are limited and do not inspire pupils. Pupils told inspectors that they used to enjoy reading, but the school's books did not interest them. This lack of investment is limiting pupils' enjoyment of reading.

The wider curriculum lacks structure and is not well sequenced. Pupils do not access experiences that help to develop them socially and culturally. Educational visits have been limited. Pupils are not clear why visits have taken place as these are not linked to their learning.

The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to learn about rights, responsibilities and respect for others. However, pupils do not engage consistently well enough in this subject. They do not develop the skills needed to be successful in future employment or training.

Statutory guidance for relationships and sex education (RSE) has not been implemented. The school does not have a RSE policy outlining the school's approach and practice. While pupils have learned about healthy relationships, their comments and behaviour towards peers and staff are not reflective of this.

Careers education is poorly planned and disjointed. Pupils have an idea of what they would like to do when they leave school, but are unsure how school will help them achieve their next steps. Pupils attended a recent careers fair. While some found this helpful, others could not recall the purpose of the visit.

Pupils regularly engage in unsafe, challenging behaviour. The behaviour policy is not fit for purpose. While some staff interact positively with pupils, this is not consistent. Teachers do not consider the needs of the pupils and how this may impact on their behaviour. The school applies punitive consequences, such as written lines or limited food choices. Pupils are not provided with the support they need to help them to understand and manage their own emotions effectively.

The work of the proprietor is not effective. A number of key school policies and development plans are based on the work of other providers. This means that identified actions are not relevant to the school and will not secure improvement. The school is operating outside its registration agreement with the Department for Education (DfE). Several pupils below the minimum registered age are attending the school.

Leadership and oversight of the school have been lacking. This has resulted in a number of unmet independent school standards, some of which impact directly on the welfare, health and safety of pupils. The school does not comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Checks on the boiler and portable appliances had lapsed and were carried out at the point of inspection. Actions identified in the fire risk assessment have not been completed. For example, damage to a fire exit has not been repaired. Leaders have not maintained checks on the water supply to ensure that it is safe to use. Water temperatures are not checked and the water supply in the toilets poses a risk of scalding.

While the proprietor has produced an accessibility plan that meets requirements of the Equality Act 2010, they have not ensured that the curriculum is accessible.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The safeguarding policy is written with regard to government guidance. Copies are available on request because the school does not have a website. Staff have completed appropriate training and know how to recognise signs of abuse or neglect.

Leaders have not made routine checks on the environment to ensure that the building is safe. The process for assessing risk is weak. Leaders have not considered the risks of activities or taken appropriate action to minimise these risks. Attendance recording is inaccurate. Leaders do not maintain records in accordance with statutory guidance. It is not clear when pupils are at school or absent.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The curriculum is not fit for purpose. Leaders have not given enough attention to what staff need to teach and the order in which it needs to be taught. This means that learning is disconnected and is not taught in a logical order that helps pupils to learn. Therefore, pupils' knowledge and skills do not build well over time. Leaders need to carefully consider curriculum content to make sure that it is coherently structured and ordered, so that pupils' learning builds progressively over time.
- Pupils with SEND do not do as well as they should. This is because teachers do not have the subject knowledge and expertise to plan and adapt learning that meets pupils' needs. Leaders need to make sure that teaching staff have the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise to make adaptations and deliver the curriculum effectively.
- Reading is not given a high priority in the school. Some pupils say that they enjoy reading, but are not inspired by the school's choice of books. Similarly, those who struggle to read are not supported well enough and fall further behind with their reading. Leaders need to make sure that staff have the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise to teach reading effectively.
- Pupils engage in frequent negative behaviour. This leads to poor engagement in learning. Leaders need to make sure that staff are suitably skilled to understand, support and manage challenging behaviour, so that pupils behave well.
- Leaders' checks on the school's performance and compliance have not been rigorous enough. The proprietor and governors have not made sure that the independent school standards are consistently met and that the premises are safe. This impacts on the welfare, health and safety of pupils, as well as their learning experience. Leaders must make sure that they fully understand their

responsibilities. They need to ensure that the school meets the independent school standards consistently and that all pupils have the opportunity to learn in a safe environment.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

Unique reference number	135422
DfE registration number	330/6121
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10212794
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	1
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Birmingham Community Venture
Chair	Barket Hussain
Headteacher	Aftaab Hussein
Annual fees (day pupils)	£28,225
Telephone number	0121 551 4837
Website	None
Email address	futurefirstschool@ymail.com
Date of previous inspection	21 to 23 November 2017

Information about this school

- Future First Independent School is located in central Birmingham. The school offers places to pupils who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Pupils are placed by local authorities, including those for Sandwell, Solihull and Worcestershire. The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school is registered to offer places to pupils between 13 and 18 years. At the time of the inspection, the school had admitted pupils between 11 and 18 years. The school is therefore operating outside its registration. Details of the proprietor did not match the information held by the DfE.
- The school was last inspected in November 2017, when it was judged to be good in all areas.
- The school has three classrooms, a large hall space and an outdoor area. Pupils participate in physical education at Small Heath leisure centre. Pupils also access learning at Small Heath Library.

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 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 had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspection team met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The lead inspector spoke with the chair of the proprietor body by telephone.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. The inspector also met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects.
- Inspectors also considered the wider curriculum. They spoke with leaders and looked at the curriculum in other subjects.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to evaluate the school's safeguarding arrangements. Policies and processes were examined as well as the school's approach to risk assessment. Inspectors also considered how well the curriculum teaches pupils how to stay safe.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's compliance with the independent school standards by reviewing several key policies, including those for admissions,

behaviour, curriculum, complaints, and health and safety. Inspectors also toured and considered the suitability of the premises. There were no responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online questionnaire, and none to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Chris Field Ofsted 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)(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.
- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor–
 - 2A(1)(b) ensures that every registered pupil who is provided with secondary education at the school is provided with relationships and sex education, except in so far as the pupil is excused as mentioned in sub-paragraph (2),
 - 2A(1)(e) makes and keeps up to date a separate written statement of its policy with regard to the provision of education as required by each of paragraphs (a) and (b),
 - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e), and
 - 2A(1)(g) publishes a copy of the statement on a website and provides a copy of the statement free of charge to anyone who asks for one.
- 2A(2) Arrangements made by the proprietor for the purposes of sub-paragraph (1)(b) must ensure that where a pupil’s parent requests that the pupil is wholly or partly excused from sex education provided as part of relationships and sex

education, the pupil is so excused until the request is withdrawn, unless or to the extent that the head teacher considers that the pupil should not be so excused.

- 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(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;
 - 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;

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;

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.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
 - 9(a) a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour;
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively;
- 10 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.
- 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].
- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

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.

- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 28(1)(d) the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.

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.

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