

Future First Independent School

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

Inspection date

10 January 2023

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), 2(2)(h)

- At the time of the previous inspection in March 2022, the school's curriculum was weak and did not meet pupils' needs. A written curriculum policy and supporting schemes of work were not in place. Subjects were not studied in enough depth. This meant that pupils' learning was shallow. They did not build sufficient knowledge and make progress over time.
- Leaders have reviewed the school's curriculum since the last inspection. They have produced a policy to set out their vision for education at the school and started to make improvements in some subjects. However, significant weaknesses remain. The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned or sequenced.
- Leaders have ensured that schemes of work are in place in subjects such as mathematics, science and English. These schemes of work set out the exact knowledge that pupils are expected to know and remember. Pupils logically build their knowledge in these subjects by progressing through the curriculum. However, in other subjects, the curriculum is not supported by appropriate plans or schemes of work. Leaders are not clear about the key pieces of knowledge they expect pupils to know and remember.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school has a systematic approach in place to teach pupils to read. They are not clear about the phonic knowledge that pupils need to know to become better readers. They have not considered how the school teaches pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read.
- These standards are not met.

Paragraph 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2A(1), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(e), 2A(1)(f), 2A(1)(g), 2A(2), 3(i)

- At the previous inspection, inspectors found that pupils did not engage well in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). Staff did not work effectively enough to

promote fundamental British values. In addition, leaders had not implemented the statutory content of relationships and sex education.

- Leaders acted quickly to strengthen the school's PSHE curriculum offer after the previous inspection. Pupils now have discrete personal development and citizenship lessons timetabled each week. These lessons help to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have ensured that a policy is in place setting out the school's approach to providing relationships and sex education. They consulted with parents before making key decisions about how the subject would be taught.
- Staff instil positive values through the way they speak to pupils. They promote democracy and individual liberty by encouraging pupils to share their opinions and discuss their feelings.
- These standards are now met.

Paragraph 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(i),

- This standard was identified as unmet at the time of the March 2022 standard inspection. Careers education was poorly planned and disjointed. Leaders did not provide pupils with sufficient information to help them achieve their next steps.
- Leaders have not addressed these weaknesses in careers education. Pupils do not access a coherent or well-planned programme that provides them with meaningful careers guidance.
- These standards are not met.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(h)

- At the time of the last inspection, teachers' subject knowledge was inconsistent. Leaders had not placed enough emphasis on developing staff expertise. Staff did not have the necessary skills to plan and adapt learning to meet pupils' needs. Nor did they did not know how to teach reading well.
- Staff are enthusiastic and care about the pupils who they teach. However, adults do not have sufficient expertise to teach the curriculum well. They lack the subject knowledge required to implement the curriculum effectively and are over-reliant on reading information from planning sheets. They do not present subject matter clearly or explore learning deeply enough. This means that pupils do not learn as well as leaders expect.
- Leaders have arranged for a mathematics teacher to work with staff and support them in delivering the mathematics curriculum. However, they have not facilitated any development opportunities or training in other areas of the curriculum. Nor do they yet have firm plans to do so.
- These standards are not met.

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

Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi)

- This standard was not met at the previous inspection because pupils did not access opportunities to develop their social and cultural awareness. Leaders did not do enough

to encourage pupils to show respect for others and to accept responsibility for their behaviour towards others.

- Leaders have been successful in addressing the weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection. They ensure that pupils take part in weekly personal development lessons that consider social and cultural issues. These lessons actively promote fundamental British values. For example, pupils study modules about the concept of democracy and the freedom of speech.
- Leaders enhance the curriculum by arranging projects and enrichment opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of society. For instance, pupils take part in 'parliament week', debating a range of social dilemmas before voting about possible solutions.
- Pupils are taught about the importance of respect for other people. They learn about protected characteristics, and equality of opportunity is promoted through the curriculum. Staff encourage pupils to reflect on and respond to social scenarios that they might encounter in modern Britain.
- Pupils learn about a range of faiths and cultures that are different to their own. Leaders arrange opportunities for pupils to visit places of worship in the local community. For instance, pupils have visited a Christian church and local mosque. In addition, staff and pupils share information about their own cultures and backgrounds, sometimes taking place in celebrations such as Diwali.
- The standards in Part 2 are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- In March 2022, the standard relating to safeguarding was not met. The culture of safeguarding was poor. Pupils engaged in unsafe behaviour. Leaders' risk assessment processes were weak. They did not do enough to manage attendance and record when pupils were absent, and did not make routine checks on the environment to ensure that the premises were safe.
- Leaders have taken action to ensure that effective safeguarding arrangements are now in place. They have introduced systems to regularly and routinely check that the premises are safe. They have strengthened procedures for checking that pupils who are not in school are safe and well. Attendance registers are maintained to record and manage pupils' absence from school.
- Leaders provide ongoing training to ensure that staff remain alert to their roles and responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Staff who join the school receive safeguarding training as part of their induction, and staff meetings are used to provide reminders and updates. Consequently, staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Leaders accurately record such concerns and take appropriate action when necessary.
- Leaders have raised expectations about the behaviour that pupils display. Staff are supported to be more proactive in the way they manage pupils' behaviour. As a result, the number of serious behaviour incidents has reduced. Pupils feel safe at school.
- Leaders have ensured that the school's safeguarding policy pays due regard to statutory guidance and is published on the school's website.

- These standards are met.

Paragraph 9(a), 10, 14

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders had not ensured that written behaviour or anti-bullying policies set out clear procedures for managing pupils' behaviour. Incidents of bullying were not handled well. In addition, leaders did not ensure that pupils were appropriately supervised at school.
- Leaders have ensured that behaviour and anti-bullying policies are now in place. These policies reflect the local context of the school. Expectations of staff and pupils are set out clearly. There are a definitive range of rewards and consequences in place for pupils.
- The anti-bullying strategy is implemented effectively. Staff are clear that bullying is never acceptable. Adults quickly address any incidents of unkind behaviour that could potentially lead to bullying.
- The number of pupils on the school roll has reduced significantly since the previous inspection. This has resulted in a higher ratio of staff to pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils are supervised at all times and staff know how to supervise pupils appropriately. Leaders understand the need to maintain the quality of supervision if the number of pupils increases in the future.

- These standards are met.

Paragraph 9, 9(b)

- At the previous inspection, staff did not implement policies effectively to manage behaviour. Adults were not trained to deal with challenging behaviour and did not help pupils develop strategies to self-regulate. As a result, pupils regularly engaged in unsafe, challenging behaviour.
- Leaders introduced revised procedures for managing pupils' behaviour after the previous inspection. They placed great emphasis on establishing consistent routines. Leaders arranged staff training to improve adults' expertise in managing challenging behaviour. They also introduced a broad range of rewards to recognise pupils' positive behaviour. Pupils appreciate these rewards and are eager to earn them.
- Adults understand the school's new approach to managing behaviour and they are now more proactive in dealing with serious challenging behaviour. As a result, the school is mostly calm. However, there is more work to do to improve pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils regularly disengage from learning and leave lessons. Staff have not yet mastered strategies to help pupils to quickly re-focus on learning.

- This standard is not met.

Paragraph 11

- In March 2022, this standard was not met because leaders were not complying with all of the relevant health and safety laws. Some necessary site checks were not carried out to ensure the school environment was safe.
- Leaders carried out an audit of health and safety procedures after the previous inspection. They introduced a formal and systematic programme of premises checks and are able to demonstrate that these checks are conducted routinely.
- This standard is met.

Paragraph 12

- The proprietor had not ensured that fire risk assessments had been completed at the time of the previous inspection.
- Leaders have ensured that a fire risk assessment has been completed. Specialist providers have been contracted to make necessary checks on fire safety equipment.
- The standard is met.

Paragraph 15

- This standard was not met previously because the school's attendance registers were not maintained accurately.
- Pupils' attendance and reasons for absence are now accurately logged in appropriate registers. School staff follow clear procedures quickly, to check that pupils who are not in school are safe and well.
- The standard is met.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- Leaders had not ensured that robust risk assessment procedures were in place at the time of the last inspection. They had not considered the risks associated with activities or taken appropriate action to minimise these risks.
- Leaders have reviewed and revised the risk assessment policy. They ensure that a range of risk assessments are completed to identify and reduce possible risks. For example, a legionella risk assessment has been completed to confirm that the school's water supply is safe.
- The standard is met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 25, 28(1), 28(1)(d)

- At the time of the previous inspection in March 2022, the premises were not well maintained to ensure pupils' safety and welfare. Leaders had not arranged for checks to be carried out on water supplies. The water supply in pupils' toilets posed a risk of scalding.
- The issues relating to the premises have been resolved. Thermostatic valves have been fitted to hot water supplies, and leaders have improved their oversight of premises checks.
- The standard is met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- At the time of the previous inspection in March 2022, the work of the proprietor was not effective. Leaders had not ensured that all of the independent school standards were met.

- Leaders have addressed some, but not all, of the unmet standards identified at the time of the previous inspection. Significant weaknesses exist in the quality of the school's curriculum and the way in which it is taught. Staff are inexperienced and lack expertise in how to teach the curriculum well. Leaders are not clear about how they will deepen staff's subject knowledge of the subjects they teach.
- Overall, these standards remain unmet.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	135422
DfE registration number	330/6121
Inspection number	10261293

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 status	Independent special 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	6
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	1
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Birmingham Community Venture
Chair	Sazid Mahmud
Headteacher	Mr Aftaab Hussain
Annual fees (day pupils)	£16,500 to £28,225
Telephone number	0121 551 4837
Website	www.futurefirstschool.co.uk
Email address	futurefirstschool@ymail.com
Date of previous standard inspection	8 to 10 March 2022

Information about this school

- The school's previous standard inspection was in March 2022.
- The school was operating outside of its registration agreement with the Department of Education at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils had been admitted below the registered age range. This continues to be the case. Leaders are currently working with

the local authority to find alternative placements for any pupils who are not in the age range 13 to 18.

- A new assistant headteacher and a new curriculum leader started at the school in September 2022.
- There has been a change in the chair of the proprietorial board. The new chair of the board started in January 2023.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The inspector held discussions with school leaders and the chair of the proprietorial board to review the progress made against the previously un-met independent school standards.
- The inspector spoke to staff who teach the curriculum and held some informal conversations with pupils to find out about their experiences at the school.
- The inspector reviewed curriculum policies and schemes of work. He also visited lessons and reviewed a sample of pupils' work.
- The inspector looked at safeguarding records and reviewed the single central record of checks made about the suitability of adults.
- The inspector scrutinised health and safety documentation and a sample of risk assessments.

Inspection team

Jonathan Leonard, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection

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 subparagraph (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; and
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 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(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that-
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively; and

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.

The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection, but are now judged to be met at this inspection

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 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;
- 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(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; and

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) the policy is implemented effectively; and
- 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
 - 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

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(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;
- 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 .
- 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 .
- 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.

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