

Inspection of Impact Independent School

240 Halesowen Road, Cradley Heath, West Midlands B64 6JA

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that being at Impact Independent School has made a real difference in their lives. They say they are happy, safe and cared for. Pupils share that they feel listened to, are helped to be themselves and are aided to make the right choices. They are right.

Pupils start this school with a range of educational experiences, many of which are disrupted. During their time at the school, no matter how short or long, leaders help them to 'reach, belong and evolve'.

Pupils may not always get their behaviour right first time. However, with support, clear boundaries and time for reflection, pupils' behaviour improves. Leaders model and recognise respect and tolerance and do not tolerate bullying.

Leaders' expectations for what pupils will leave school with are high. As a result of targeted work, pupils successfully return to their mainstream school or remain at Impact Independent School and study for a range of qualifications. Many develop positive patterns of attendance, but not all.

Many pupils enjoy the space, freedom and responsibility they are given during their time at the allotment. They learn to grow and look after living things, as well as value the gift of giving produce and plants to the local community.

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

The headteacher sets a clear vision and ethos for both staff and pupils. Leaders provide safe spaces for pupils and staff to work and learn in. Staff receive effective training to support pupils with their behaviour and learning. The headteacher has created a dedicated team to help further develop the school as it is now on two sites. Staff share the vision and belief that every pupil deserves to get the right help, at the right time and in a way that is suited to them as an individual. In many ways, this vision is a reality. Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are met in full.

When pupils first join the school, leaders work closely with families, schools and external agencies to make sure that each pupil starts on the right pathway for their needs. Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They provide a curriculum that supports key stage 4 pupils to achieve a range of GCSE qualifications in readiness for their next steps. Where appropriate, some vocational studies are followed too. Both routes build learning over time. Teachers' use of resources and the checks they make are ensuring pupils remember what they have studied. The school's careers programme provides advice and support for pupils taking their next steps in education or training, but this provision varies in quality and mostly happens in Year 11.

Much of the focus for most key stage 3 pupils is on equipping pupils with the ability to manage their behaviour and regulate themselves so that they can successfully

resume their education at their mainstream school. Pupils appreciate this and are keen to get it right and return. Leaders make sure pupils in both key stages access reading in a way that is meaningful to them. They provide extra help if needed.

Across the curriculum, pupils learn what they need so that they become increasingly independent. Staff help pupils to learn the important knowledge and skills, as set out in the curriculum. Pupils develop independence by being able to choose the best strategy for themselves so that they can remain focused on their learning. Work in books shows that pupils take care and pride in what they do. They achieve well.

Pupils learn a range of strategies to cope with their emotions and manage their behaviour. Leaders have robust systems in place to manage behaviour, safeguarding and attendance. Partner schools spoke highly of the partnership in place and the regular sharing of crucial information. Leaders work hard to make sure pupils attend school. Despite this, some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This means they are missing much of their education.

Staff know individual pupils' needs well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use information given to them by previous settings and specialists to good effect. They are also adept at recognising where there are unidentified needs and act swiftly to put plans and actions in place.

This expertise is helping pupils to be successful. Parents and carers recognise the difference that this knowledge and support makes. They say that communication, partnership working, supportive staff and an amazing headteacher are all helping to 'change lives and be the making of their children'.

Leaders encourage pupils to be visible in their local community. Pupils develop independence and learn how to manage money through visits to the local shops. Pupils share plants and produce grown on the allotment with older people in the community. They take part in projects that develop their consideration of others, such as donating to the local church's food bank.

The school's relationships and sex education and health education curriculum helps pupils learn about concepts such as consent and healthy relationships. Leaders provide pupils with experiences of a range of religions, as well as consideration of what it means to have no faith. The curriculum supports pupils to consider sensitive but important topics such as protected characteristics, drug awareness, vaping and discrimination. Pupils like that teachers tackle these subjects head-on, in an open and honest way. They also like the range of texts they read that are 'hard-hitting' and 'thought-provoking'.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders set the scene for safeguarding in the school clearly within their safeguarding policy which is published on the school's website and has regard to the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Leaders complete necessary recruitment checks on new staff in a timely manner. Once appointed, staff receive a thorough induction so that they are prepared for their new role well. Staff know what to do if they have a concern, and when and why they do it.

Leaders are extremely knowledgeable about the risks that individual pupils face. They work extensively with numerous safeguarding partners and agencies to protect the pupils. They work closely with the pupils to equip them to keep themselves safe in different situations.

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

- Careers education is not as effective as it could be. Pupils across the year groups do not consistently get the high-quality advice they need to prepare them as well as they could for life after school. Leaders should improve this aspect of their work so that all pupils receive careers advice and support of a consistently high quality.
- Despite leaders' efforts, attendance for some pupils remains low. Leaders' analysis of attendance is not refined enough. Leaders should sharpen their analysis so they can find more effective strategies to raise attendance for all pupils, but especially those who do not attend school regularly.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	141560
DfE registration number	332/6010
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10254672
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	90
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Terry Breen
Headteacher	Terry Breen
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13,650 to £16,235
Telephone number	0121 5022645
Website	www.impactindependentschool.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@impactededucation.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 April to 2 May 2019

Information about this school

- The proprietor is also the headteacher.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in May 2019. In September 2021, Ofsted carried out a material change inspection to approve the proprietor's request to increase the school's admission limit to 120 and to use additional premises.
- The school operates from two sites. These are 40 Halesowen Road, Old Hill, Cradley Heath, B64 6JA and 102-104 Birmingham Road, Dudley, DY1 4RF.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, information and communication technology and personal, social and health education. In these subjects, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work.
- The inspectors asked school leaders, pupils and parents about safeguarding arrangements and safety routines. The lead inspector examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records.
- The lead inspector carried out activities to consider how well the school meets the independent school standards. This included: a detailed tour of the two sites and premises; scrutinising the school's single central record; and considering documents, policies and plans linked to the health, safety and welfare of pupils, such as the fire risk assessment and checks on fire safety equipment.
- Inspectors talked with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff and parents. The lead inspector spoke with a representative from Dudley local authority.
- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour throughout the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with leaders to consider how they support pupils' behaviour and

attendance.

- As part of their work to check compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors had formal meetings with staff. These included: the headteacher, other leaders, teaching staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Susan Hickerton

Ofsted Inspector

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