

Inspection of Build a Future Independent School

Main Street, West Ashby, Lincolnshire LN9 5PT

Inspection dates: 4 to 6 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent
school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that they are safe at this school. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils appreciate the care staff provide for them. They trust staff to deal with any bullying fairly.

Staff help pupils to manage their emotions. They are effective at recognising when pupils are becoming distressed. However, significant numbers of pupils refuse to attend lessons. Sometimes lessons do not take place because pupils do not attend or because staff do not want to interrupt pupils who are engaged in a different learning activity. Staff regularly spend time encouraging pupils to engage with their learning. This has limited success, as some staff make it too easy for pupils to opt out of learning. Expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave are not high enough. Not all pupils are challenged to achieve as well as they should.

The provision for pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection. Pupils benefit from experiences that have deepened their understanding of the need to respect others. For example, they are exposed to different cultures and religions during annual festivals and celebrations. However, such experiences have not led to pupils having more than a limited understanding of Britain's wide variety of cultures and faiths. Pupils' knowledge of fundamental British values is also limited. There are too few activities that nurture pupils' talents and interests.

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

Leaders have very recently introduced new curriculums into the 'academic provision'. These curriculums set out what pupils should know in a logical order. However, leaders have not thought carefully enough about the implementation of these curriculums. For example, they have introduced a mastery approach to the mathematics curriculum, without ensuring teachers have a secure knowledge of this method of teaching. This lack of careful consideration across subjects has led to the quality of education pupils receive being inconsistent.

Leaders do not assess with sufficient accuracy what pupils do and do not know on their first admission to the school. Consequently, teachers do not always know what knowledge gaps pupils may have when they arrive at the school and what their next steps in learning should be. Due to the recent changes to classes, some teachers have limited information about the pupils they are teaching. Leaders do not use information about pupils' English and mathematical knowledge to plan learning that meets pupils' needs. As a result, teachers have planned work that is too easy for some pupils.

Those pupils who study vocational subjects such as construction enjoy their lessons. They say their knowledge and skills are developing so that they are able to tackle more challenging projects. However, pupils still do not get the opportunity to study

higher-level courses. Those who take formal examinations generally achieve lower-level qualifications, which can be below that which they may be capable of.

In some subjects, teachers check that pupils understand what they are learning. Sometimes, pupils revisit learning to improve their understanding. In these lessons, teachers provide pupils with guidance on how to improve their work. Some pupils go on to make these improvements. However, some teachers have not identified exactly what pupils need to know and remember before moving on to new learning.

Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics-based reading recovery programme to support any pupils who struggle to read fluently. However, they have not used the new assessments to find out which pupils will benefit from the reading support programme. Not all pupils engage in the initial reading assessment. Due to this, leaders have not been able to support all pupils who struggle with reading to read as well as they could and so access their wider learning more readily. Leaders and teachers do not provide enough encouragement to those pupils who can read confidently to read more widely.

Leaders are quick to respond to changes in pupils' behaviour. They make suitable adjustments to behaviour plans and risk assessments when new or more concerning behaviours arise. Leaders have accurate records of pupils' poor behaviour and incidents of bullying. However, they do not regularly analyse this data to identify emerging patterns or concerns. Inconsistencies remain in the way in which staff manage pupils' behaviour. Significant numbers of pupils refuse to attend lessons and spend most of their time in corridors or in the school grounds. There are not consistently high expectations from all staff to address the consequent loss of learning time.

Leaders are aware of, and provide, appropriate support for pupils whose attendance is poor. However, a significant number of pupils do not have good attendance.

The programme to support pupils' personal development has a clear structure. Leaders have ensured that pupils learn the most important knowledge they need to prepare them for their next steps. Pupils gain a good understanding of the different protected characteristics through their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. They learn how to respect those with backgrounds different from their own, although their knowledge of different faiths and cultures is not as secure as it could be. Older pupils receive independent careers advice and guidance. They also visit further education colleges. Pupils have very limited opportunities to develop talents and interests outside the curriculum offer.

Following a sustained period of leadership turbulence, the proprietor has recruited experienced leaders. The new leaders' improvement plans are in their very early stages. They are beginning to address the school's previous weaknesses.

Staff value the support leaders give them. They say that leaders care about their well-being and are considerate of their workload. They enjoy working at the school.

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards (the standards). They have improved their oversight of the school. They have ensured that the premises are suitable and that pupils are kept safe. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school's website.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The proprietor has ensured that safeguarding is a high priority. Staff have undergone extensive safeguarding training and receive regular updates. They meet weekly to ensure that they are all aware of individual pupil circumstances. They are very knowledgeable about what signs to look out for that might indicate a possible concern.

Safeguarding records are accurate and detail the follow-up work safeguarding leaders take to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to support pupils. They have appropriate procedures in place to manage any allegations.

Pupils are taught about how to stay safe in their community, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have not given sufficient thought to how teachers should teach the knowledge that pupils should learn in the different subjects they study. Leaders have not ensured, for example, that teachers understand how best to teach the knowledge pupils should learn. This limits the effectiveness with which teachers teach their subjects and pupils learn the intended curriculum. Leaders should ensure that all teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to teach the intended curriculum in their subjects effectively.
- Leaders have not ensured that they, and teachers, use checks on pupils' knowledge and understanding well enough to inform how best to teach the intended curriculum. Checks on what pupils do and do not know when they first arrive at the school are inaccurate. As pupils learn the curriculum, not all teachers know how best to identify and resolve any ongoing gaps that pupils may have in their knowledge and understanding before they move learning on. Consequently, pupils do not always complete work that is sufficiently challenging for them. This includes completing qualifications that may be below that of which they are capable. Leaders should ensure that all staff know how to check on what pupils know and understand, including when they first arrive at the school, to help them plan learning that ensures pupils successfully build their understanding over time and achieve well.
- Leaders have not prioritised the teaching of reading. They have recently trained

staff to use a phonics-based reading intervention. However, this support is not currently being provided to the pupils who need it. The reading assessments that leaders have required pupils to complete have been too complicated. This has led to pupils refusing to complete them. This has resulted in leaders not gathering the information they require about the needs of those who may be struggling to read. Furthermore, those pupils who are reluctant to read more widely do not receive sufficient support to encourage them to engage more readily. This can limit pupils' chances of being able to access the curriculum fully and achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that staff understand how best to support those who struggle to read, including through using the phonics programme, and encourage all pupils to read widely so that all pupils become confident, enthusiastic readers who understand the importance of reading to achieving well.

- Expectations of pupils' behaviour are not consistently high. There are inconsistencies in how staff respond to pupils who refuse to attend lessons. As a consequence, too many pupils miss vital learning, which limits what they know and remember over time. Leaders must ensure that all staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and provide a consistent message to pupils about the importance of learning so that all pupils attend lessons more regularly, enabling them to learn more and achieve well.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils benefit from sufficient opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Pupils do not have a secure understanding of different cultures and faiths or British values. Consequently, pupils are not prepared as well as they should be for their next steps when they leave school and for life in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that the personal development programme provides pupils with effective opportunities to become responsible, respectful and active citizens, including by enabling them to develop talents and interests that may serve them well in the future.

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	145932
DfE registration number	925/6009
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10267689
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	73
Number of part-time pupils	7
Proprietor	Build-a-Future Ltd
Chair	Nicola Kelly
Headteacher	Kimberley Albelda
Annual fees (day pupils)	£19,552 to £35,682
Telephone number	01507 524015
Website	https://education.keys-group.co.uk/school/build-a-future-independent-school/
Email address	admin.buildafuture@keys-group.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 November to 2 December 2021

Information about this school

- Build a Future Independent School provides alternative education for pupils aged 11 to 16 who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools or who are at risk of permanent exclusion. Some pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) that states their primary area of need is either social, emotional and mental health or cognition and learning.
- The school is situated on two sites: Main Street, West Ashby, Lincolnshire, LN9 5PT and East Heckington, Boston Road, PE20 3QF. Currently, all pupils receive their education at the East Heckington site due to the imminent commencement of building work at the other site. Leaders anticipate that the current arrangement will be in place for at least the next six months.
- The school is registered to provide full-time education for up to 125 pupils. There are currently 73 pupils on roll.
- There were only pupils aged 13 to 15 years on the school's roll at the time of the inspection. A significant number of Year 11 pupils had just left the school.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place on 30 November to 2 December 2021.
- The school has received two progress monitoring inspections. The first was on 11 July 2022 and the second took place on 31 January 2023.
- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in April 2023, after the previous headteacher and executive headteacher left the school.

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.

Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspection was carried out unannounced in line with the Department for Education's (DfE) commission.
- Inspectors held various meetings with the representatives of the proprietor, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into English (including reading), mathematics,

science and PSHE. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited physical education and vocational lessons.

- Inspectors also looked at individual pupils' EHC plans and discussed them with the headteacher, who is the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including the school action plan.
- To judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors read the school's relevant policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safer recruitment of staff and met with the leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors took note of the responses received on Ofsted's online survey Ofsted Parent View and considered the results of the staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors met with a small number of pupils to gather their views.
- Inspectors considered relevant documentation and reviewed the school facilities, to check the school's compliance with the standards.

The school's progress in meeting previously failed standards

During the inspection, we checked whether the school now meets the independent school standards that it was judged to have failed at its previous progress monitoring inspection on 31 January 2023.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school now meets the previously failed standards.**
- At the previous monitoring inspection, leaders had failed to ensure that appropriate actions were always taken when staff raised serious safeguarding concerns. Statutory guidance was not always followed. Furthermore, leaders' actions in response to these serious safeguarding concerns were not always recorded on the electronic system. These failings were potentially putting pupils at risk.
- The proprietor has ensured that they have a much closer operational view of safeguarding. Senior leaders have regularly carried out the actions from their plan to address the safeguarding weaknesses. There are weekly checks on all electronic safeguarding records to ensure that they contain the correct detail. Leaders check these records have clear and appropriate follow-up actions that are completed in a timely manner. Leaders responsible for safeguarding have undertaken further training to ensure that they consistently follow statutory guidance.
- At the previous emergency inspection, leaders had not demonstrated good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so the standards were met consistently. They had not fulfilled their responsibilities effectively so that the school consistently met all the standards and actively promoted the well-being of pupils.
- Through their actions in meeting the unmet standard in relation to safeguarding, leaders have demonstrated the knowledge appropriate to their role. This standard

is now met. Consequently, leaders now demonstrate the necessary skills and knowledge in relation to all the standards and have ensured that all the standards are met.

The school now meets the following standards

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.

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-This was the school's third progress monitoring inspection.
 - 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.

Information about the progress monitoring inspection

- The DfE commissioned a progress monitoring inspection to take place at the same time as the standard inspection. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the requirements of the standards that relate to welfare, health and safety of pupils and leadership and management that were judged as unmet at the emergency inspection which took place on 31 January 2023.
- This was the school's third progress monitoring inspection.
- The DfE had previously required the school to submit an action plan. Ofsted evaluated this plan on 15 May 2023 and deemed it to be acceptable.
- The lead inspector met with the proprietor and school leaders.
- The lead inspector considered documentation related to safeguarding, behaviour, health and safety and risk assessment.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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