

Future First Independent School

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

Inspection date

11 October 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

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

- At the time of the previous standard inspection in March 2022, weaknesses in the school's curriculum had a significant negative impact on pupils' education. These weaknesses had not been addressed by the time of the school's first progress monitoring inspection in January 2023. The curriculum was not supported by appropriate schemes of work in all subjects. The school had not ensured that a systematic approach was in place to teach pupils to read.
- Since that time, the school has not worked urgently enough to address weaknesses in the quality of education. Elements of the school's curriculum policy are not implemented well. For example, the curriculum policy states that leaders review 'pupil profile' documents at the start of each academic year to ensure that the curriculum meets pupils' needs. However, this work has not been completed. Teachers do not have an accurate understanding of what pupils know and remember in the subjects they study.
- Leaders have begun work to improve the design of the curriculum, but they have been slow in implementing changes. Leaders have invited support from a specialist consultant. They have reviewed the curriculum and worked to develop a new approach. This approach has included the recent introduction of new schemes of work in many subjects. However, these schemes of work are not suitably specific about the knowledge and skills that leaders expect pupils to learn. They do not build pupils' knowledge logically over time. They do not take account of the specific needs of pupils at the school.
- The school has been slow to ensure that pupils learn to read well. Leaders have recently drafted a policy that sets out a more structured approach for the teaching of reading. The policy places emphasis on the use of a phonics programme to teach pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. However, the policy has not been implemented. Pupils are not yet benefiting from a reading curriculum that is well planned or sequenced.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are not met.

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

- At the previous progress monitoring inspection, the school had not done enough to

ensure that pupils benefited from careers education. Pupils did not access a coherent or well-planned programme of careers guidance.

- The school has taken clear steps to improve the quality of careers guidance provided to pupils. A careers officer has recently begun attending the school and works individually with each pupil. In addition, leaders have made firm plans for pupils to attend a variety of careers events. They are also in the early stages of arranging work experience placements for pupils. The new approach is well considered. However, these arrangements have only just been introduced. Leaders are not yet able to demonstrate that the school's careers programme enables pupils to make informed decisions about their futures.
- The standards in this part are not met.

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

- At the time of the last progress monitoring inspection, the school had not placed enough emphasis on developing staff's expertise. Adults lacked the subject knowledge required to teach the curriculum effectively.
- The school has recently employed three new members of teaching staff. Leaders see this change as having strengthened the level of expertise at the school. However, there remains too much variation in the way that the curriculum is implemented. For instance, sometimes staff select tasks that are not well considered. These tasks place too much focus upon activities, rather than teaching the specific knowledge that pupils are expected to know and remember. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as leaders expect.
- The school is not doing enough to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs met. Adults do not show a good understanding of how to adapt teaching to meet these pupils' needs. The school does not use effective strategies or resources to help pupils with SEND access the curriculum.
- The standards in this part are not met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 32(1)(c)

- A copy of the school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.
- The standard in this part is met.

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- At the time of the previous progress monitoring inspection, the school had taken the necessary action to ensure that effective safeguarding systems were in place. However, the school's safeguarding procedures have not been well maintained since this time.
- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education, but the policy is not being put into practice effectively. Sometimes adults are not alert to potential signs that a pupil may need help. Adults do not consider all concerns as being worthy of reporting. The school has not ensured that all concerns about pupils are recorded accurately. Leaders do not review potential patterns or identify potential risks. The school is not doing enough to safeguard its pupils.
- The standards in this part are not met.

Paragraphs 9, 9(b)

- At the previous standard inspection in March 2022, staff did not implement the school's policies for managing pupils' behaviour. Although the school had refined the behaviour policy by the time of the progress monitoring inspection in January 2023, weaknesses remained. Some pupils regularly disengaged from lessons. Staff did not use effective strategies to help these pupils refocus on their learning.
- Leaders have reviewed the school's behaviour management procedures. They continue to introduce new ideas to manage pupils' behaviour. However, the school lacks the expertise to skilfully address pupils' complex needs. There remains inconsistency in how well the school's behaviour policy is implemented. Pupils regularly lose focus in lessons and distract others from learning. The school uses sanctions to address serious breaches of school rules, but these sanctions do not form part of high-quality restorative work or support. This means that pupils are not successfully helped to improve their behaviour over time.
- The standards in this part are not met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- At the time of the previous progress monitoring inspection in January 2023, the school had begun taking steps to improve the effectiveness of leadership. Nevertheless, significant weaknesses remained and not all of the standards were met.
- In May 2023, the Department for Education judged the school's plan to improve the quality of provision as not acceptable. The plan lacked specificity about the exact steps leaders intended to take in order to make necessary improvements. Since this time, the school has invited external support to provide guidance in drafting a more suitable plan of action. However, this work has been slow. An acceptable plan is still not in place.
- The proprietor body does not maintain sufficient oversight of the school's work. Lines of accountability and procedures for leaders to monitor the quality of education at the school are not clear. The proprietor body does not have an accurate view of the school's performance.
- The standards in this part are not met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has an accessibility plan that fulfils the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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. 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	10298207

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 day 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	3
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Birmingham Community Venture
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

- Future First Independent School caters for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, including autism and social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is registered to educate up to 40 pupils. The number of pupils on roll has decreased since the time of the previous inspection.
- The school is operating according to its registration agreement with the Department of Education. All pupils are within the registered age range.
- The school had a standard inspection in March 2022.

- The chair of the proprietor board resigned in June 2023. The board has not yet appointed a new chair.
- Three new members of teaching staff joined the school in September 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 progress monitoring inspection in January 2023. This was the second progress monitoring inspection.
- After the previous inspection, the Department for Education required the school to prepare an action plan. This action plan was judged not to be acceptable on 24 May 2023.
- The inspector held discussions with school leaders to review the progress made against the previously unmet 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 held a meeting with the leader responsible for safeguarding. He also reviewed the single central record of checks made about the suitability of adults.
- A member of the proprietor board was not available for the inspector to speak to during the inspection.
- This inspection was conducted without notice.

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.

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

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.

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