

Inspection of Values Academy

15 Key Hill, Hockley, Birmingham, West Midlands B18 5PB

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
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The quality of education	Inadequate
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Behaviour and attitudes	Inadequate
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Personal development	Inadequate
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Leadership and management	Inadequate
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	No
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What is it like to attend this school?

At Values Academy, pupils are happy and safe. They enjoy positive relationships with adults and other pupils. In weekly community meetings, pupils celebrate their successes together. Bullying is rare, and pupils know that staff will sort it out if it happens. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is generally calm and orderly. They are polite and respectful towards others. Pupils who struggle to regulate their own behaviour receive prompt and effective care and support. Despite this, the behaviour policy is inconsistently applied, which leads to some poor behaviour not being challenged.

Pupils do not achieve as well as they could because the curriculum does not meet their needs. Staff do not have high expectations of what pupils should be learning. Pupils are absent from school and lessons too often, and their learning is disrupted. Staff accept pupils' absence too readily. Leaders have not ensured that the school meets the independent school standards (the standards).

Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures and how to keep themselves safe. However, support for pupils' personal development is not well planned or delivered. Careers information, advice and guidance are not effective. Pupils are not taught explicitly enough the skills they need to thrive beyond school. As a result, pupils are not adequately prepared for the next stage of their lives.

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

Values Academy is undergoing significant change. When the principal joined the school in March 2023, she correctly identified that expectations of pupils were too low and that the curriculum needed to be revised. Having overcome a number of challenges, the school is getting back on an even keel and things are starting to improve. However, leaders know that there is a long way to go. Pupils do not make sufficient progress in their learning. They do not receive enough guidance to make informed decisions about their next steps.

Curriculum plans are incomplete. No clear end-points are set out for what pupils should be learning. Where curriculum plans do exist, they do not take into account the needs of the pupils. Teachers' assessments do not correctly identify pupils' starting points. This is especially important because all pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers' understanding of effective teaching and learning is not well developed. As a result, pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could.

Dedicated staff work hard to build positive relationships with pupils. Teachers plan lessons based on pupils' interests in order to engage them in learning. Pupils are keen to participate in class discussions, but they are rarely expected to complete any meaningful written work. Reading does not have a high profile across the school. Gaps in pupils' reading and writing skills are not closed effectively. Learning is not planned sequentially, which hinders pupils' ability to remember what they have been

taught. Added to this, pupils are absent from school too often, which affects the continuity of their learning. Leaders have not ensured that the requirements in part 1 of the standards are met.

A disproportionate amount of learning time is dedicated to personal, social, economic and health education (PSHE), personal development, careers, citizenship and leisure activities. Despite the significant amount of time given to these, there is limited evidence of the impact of this work. Careers guidance is not effective. Pupils do not receive work experience or engage with employers meaningfully. This means that pupils are not prepared for their next steps.

Staff and pupils enjoy positive and respectful relationships. However, the school does not specifically teach the communication and social skills that pupils need to succeed in their future lives. As a result, pupils do not develop the self-confidence, self-esteem and self-knowledge they need to succeed in the outside world. Leaders have not ensured that the school meets the requirements of part 2 of the standards.

The wider curriculum is not sufficiently deliberately planned to teach pupils the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the wider world. Staff deliver personal development topics, but there are no detailed plans in place. As a result, pupils gain a superficial understanding of different cultures and faiths. For example, pupils were able to explain that Diwali is a festival of light, but they were not able to explain anything about the Hindu faith, why Diwali is the festival of light and what light symbolises for Hindus. Pupils do not have rich cultural experiences that help prepare them for life in modern Britain.

The principal is trying to set high expectations and to introduce effective procedures, such as the new policy on mobile phones. However, leadership capacity is severely limited as the principal and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) both work across two academies. Leaders do not have the capacity to drive through the improvements that are needed in all areas of provision. In the past, trustees were not effective in holding leaders to account for the quality of education. Leaders have not ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards. The school is compliant with section 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's safeguarding policy takes into account the latest government guidance and a copy is available to parents and carers on request from the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The curriculum is not well planned and does not meet pupils' needs. The school has not ensured that all teachers set high expectations of what pupils could achieve. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress as they should. The school should ensure that all pupils make good progress by reviewing and revising the curriculum, so that pupils' learning is well sequenced and teachers have ambitious expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers do not assess pupils' starting points accurately, which means that they cannot adapt the curriculum appropriately to address gaps in their learning. The school should ensure that teachers receive further training to assess pupils' starting points more accurately and adapt the curriculum more effectively to meet their needs.
- Currently, the timetable does not maximise learning time for core subjects. This means that pupils do not make as much progress in mathematics and English as they should. The school should ensure that all learning time is used effectively to support pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics and English.
- Support for pupils' personal development is not effective. As a result, pupils do not develop the communication and social skills they need to succeed in their future lives. The school should ensure that communication and social skills are deliberately and explicitly taught through an increasingly diverse range of experiences and curriculum plans in order to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils do not receive effective, independent careers information, advice and guidance. As a result, pupils are not well prepared for future education, employment or training. The school should ensure that pupils receive effective, independent careers information, advice and guidance so that they are better prepared for future education, employment or training opportunities.
- Pupils are absent from school and lessons too often, and this is too readily accepted. As a result, pupils' learning is disjointed and gaps in their learning persist or in some cases widen. The school should ensure that all instances of absence are challenged, reasons are identified and support is provided to parents and pupils so that attendance improves.
- Trustees have failed to hold leaders to account in the past. As a result, expectations have slipped and complacency has set in. Trustees must ensure that they hold leaders to account for improving the quality of education and to ensure that the school meets all of the independent school standards consistently.

How can I feed back my views?

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	132743
DfE registration number	330/6101
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10267625
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	11
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Values Academy
Chair	Ruth Grindey
Headteacher	Monika Sethi
Annual fees (day pupils)	£25,600 to £51,000
Telephone number	0121 523 0222
Website	www.valuesacademy.org.uk
Email address	info@valuesacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 to 23 May 2019

Information about this school

- Values Academy Birmingham is a small independent school for pupils with social, emotional, mental health challenges. Many pupils join the school having been excluded from other schools or having experienced long absences from school in the past.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school website, published information and documents shared by the provider.
- The lead inspector carried out an inspection of the school premises to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors met with the principal, the designated safeguarding lead and the SENCO.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, PSHE and humanities. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at the wider curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about support for pupils' attendance and behaviour, including any recorded incidents of bullying or sexual abuse or harassment.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils at lunchtimes and breaktimes about behaviour and how they learn to keep themselves safe.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about their safeguarding training and checked the single central record of pre-employment checks on staff.

Inspection team

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Russell Hinton

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; and
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
 - 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
 - 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)(g) where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs;
 - 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(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
- 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;

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(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)(vii) encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England;

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
 - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.

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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