

Independent Educational Services

Sibson Village Hall, Nuneaton, CV13 6LE

Inspection dates	4–6 March 2014	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Outstanding	1
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- In the short time since the school opened, students have made good progress in their learning, particularly with the improvement of their English and mathematics.
- The curriculum provided for each student is based on an excellent assessment of their individual needs and interests. Consequently, the courses provided for them enable students to achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good across the full age range and the variety of subjects taught. The staff are skilful and imaginative in finding the right approach to motivate and engage each student.
- Students quickly develop positive attitudes to school, despite their previous negative experiences. Attendance is excellent and students are helped to find effective ways to manage their frustration and anxiety.
- The school's leaders are very successful at providing the bespoke community education experiences which are at the heart of their vision for successful learning. As a result, they have ensured that good teaching and an outstanding curriculum enable each student to learn successfully and to make good progress.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Teachers do not have an entirely consistent approach to the development of speaking, listening and writing skills across the full curriculum.
- The school has limited links with other schools to enable students to develop a greater variety of social skills and to prepare for the next steps in their education and social skills.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The school was inspected with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed ten lessons taught by eight different members of staff. A range of school documentation, including policies, schemes of work and examples of students' work was scrutinised.
- Discussions were held with the proprietors and senior leaders, two parents, a representative of the placing local authority, and informally with a number of students and members of staff.
- Questionnaire responses from five parents, five students and nine members of staff were considered.
- At the request of the Department for Education, a request for a material change to extend the school's age range, increase the number of students, add additional premises, and provide for students with autistic spectrum conditions, was considered.

Inspection team

David Young, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Independent Educational Services (IES) is an independent special day school located in the village hall in Sibson, a small village in Leicestershire. Premises in two further local village halls are also used.
- The school is registered to admit up to eight full-time male and female students in the age range 10 to 16 years.
- There are currently eight students on roll, aged between 11 and 16 years, with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and associated disabilities and complex special educational needs. All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school vision is for bespoke community education, enabling students to access the whole curriculum and to fill the gaps in their educational experience across the breadth of the curriculum.
- The school makes use of a range of additional locations to provide sports, recreational and vocational experiences for students under the direction of its own staff. It does not use any alternative provider for students.
- This is the school's first Ofsted inspection since it was registered as an independent school in March 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the quality of teaching by undertaking individual monitoring of and providing feedback to staff on:
 - the clarity of the language used to describe and explain what they want students to do and to understand
 - the use of strategies for the review and consolidation of learning at the end of lessons
 - the development of handwriting, spelling and punctuation across all curriculum areas.
- Develop links with other schools to enable students to:
 - benefit from additional curriculum experiences
 - build relationships with a wider range of students of a similar age.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students are making good progress with their learning from mostly low starting points on entry to the school. The attainment of almost all students is below that expected for their age as a result of gaps in their previous learning. However, they are already beginning to catch up with their knowledge and understanding at a good rate. As a result of good teaching, there are examples of outstanding progress in aspects of some students' learning, for example in reading, over the relatively short time since they joined the school. At present, students' rates of progress are varied across different subjects and aspects of learning. However, all have demonstrated at least good progress in some areas of their work. Students' positive achievements are accelerated by a variety of excellent courses and activities, such as hair and beauty, food studies, practical science, fishing and play therapy which are well chosen to match individual students' learning needs. Students who were reluctant to read are beginning to enjoy their chosen books and magazines; others are learning to improve their writing skills and to express their own ideas on paper. The majority are making good progress with their numeracy skills, including the ability to draw and interpret graphs of different types. The school gives good attention to the requirements set out in students' statements of special educational needs and staff are skilled at helping students to overcome their emotional and social barriers to successful learning.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

The behaviour and personal development of students are good. All students enter the school with a history of behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. Their behaviour improves as they benefit from the small groups in which they work and the one-to-one teaching which is commonly available. The staff have high expectations of students' behaviour within the school community. All students demonstrate the ability to cooperate and manage their anger or frustration most of the time. The staff manage any incidents of disobedience or personal frustration extremely well. The school maintains a calm atmosphere and the staff act as strong role models. Excellent individual provision is made for any student who finds it difficult to work in a group. In these cases, appropriate opportunities are made at the right time for individual students to begin to develop cooperation and friendships with others in paired or group arrangements.

The school gives excellent attention to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. All breaks and lunchtimes are used effectively to engage students in conversation, in group games and activities, and to develop secure relationships with adults in the school. Appropriate themes are covered in school assemblies and students are encouraged to consider the needs of others beyond the school. Students take an active part in the local community, including litter picking, recycling and conservation projects. They have appropriate opportunities to study contrasting lifestyles and cultures and to take part in fundraising, for example for a school in Malawi. Students are prepared effectively to play a part in the wider community in the future, including opportunities where appropriate to undertake work experience with local employers. Good opportunities are provided for students to learn about a variety of cultures, beliefs and lifestyles through the celebration of theme days, such as a cross-curricular day on Asia, individual visits to a local abbey and to a mosque, and practical involvement in 'Fairtrade Fortnight'. The school handbook makes it clear that all potentially controversial political issues will be approached in a balanced and non-partisan manner.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good and enables all students to make good progress with their learning. The quality of teachers' planning is based on suitable schemes of work, a knowledge of the scope of work to be covered over time, and clear objectives for each student to achieve. Teachers

provide an effective range of practical learning activities for students which enable them to re-engage with learning despite the difficulties and disaffection they may previously have experienced. Students engage in their learning with interest and enthusiasm, for example in practical activities in food studies, hair and beauty, fishing and play therapy. Teachers' knowledge of the learning needs of individual students is outstanding. All members of staff have established strong relationships with their students, and students trust and respect the adults with whom they work.

In the majority of lessons teachers communicate instructions, information and expectations clearly; occasionally, students do not understand some of the language or explanations provided. Lessons are conducted at a suitable pace which ensures that students are able to complete tasks, including the recording of information. In some instances, insufficient time is taken to review learning and to check that students have a good understanding of new ideas and information. Good opportunities are provided for students to develop their reading skills and staff are sensitive to the levels of writing of which individual students are capable.

Students' marked work shows clear progress and improvement over time, although the emphasis on the quality of handwriting, spelling and punctuation in written work is not managed consistently across all subjects. Teachers consistently provide helpful written advice about how work may be improved and students are clear about their targets for improvement. Arrangements for the assessment of students' learning are robust and comprehensive. In a short time the school has begun to build a comprehensive picture of the rates at which individual students are making progress. Procedures for the recording and evaluation of extensive data are exemplary and, as a result, the staff have a good understanding of the extent of progress made by each student.

Quality of curriculum

Outstanding

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. The school's leaders have ensured that it truly fulfils its aim to provide a bespoke curriculum for each student. The curriculum includes a strong core of experiences in English, mathematics, science and the use of information and communication technology at levels appropriate to the needs of each student. Imaginative projects in food studies and design technology, together with visits by the 'Mad Scientist' add a challenging practical dimension to students' learning. Students are taught in small groups or individually for different subjects according to a careful analysis of the individual social, emotional and learning needs. A small number of students are taught regularly in alternative locations which have been suitably set up and arranged to provide a secure and welcoming environment for learning. Here they are able to engage in continuous conversation with staff while taking an active part in practical activities such as cooking or preparing for an AQA entry level award in hair and beauty.

The high quality of the curriculum experiences, precisely tailored to the needs and abilities of individual students, make an outstanding contribution to students' motivation and eagerness to attend. There are a number of off-site, practical experiences included in individual timetables. For example, during the inspection a small group of students were being prepared for a fishing trip. The teacher placed a good emphasis on the required health and safety requirements and ensured that they were familiar with the equipment to be used. They were eager to get going and their success was reported back at the next morning's staff briefing. All of the experiences provided are planned with equal rigour and based on a robust understanding of individual students' previous achievements and current stage of personal, social and learning needs. The school continues to seek extensions to its curriculum provision, including a desire to develop links with other schools. The school has developed good relationships with the local careers service and individual interviews and visits to prospective colleges or employers are provided at the appropriate time. Students who have not previously valued school report that they enjoy school and that 'this is the best school they have ever attended'.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety**Good**

The school's arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are good. The proprietors have ensured that all the regulatory requirements are met. Excellent attention is given to the safe recruitment of staff and the details of checks on staff suitability are recorded in the required single central register. All aspects of safeguarding are managed with rigour; all staff are trained at the appropriate levels in child protection and the designated persons have a good awareness of appropriate links with external agencies. The school's policies for behaviour, the prevention of bullying and for first aid are implemented effectively; the staff are suitably trained, and briefed on a daily basis. Good attention is given to the safety of the premises and suitable risk assessments have been prepared for all aspects of the school's work and to cater for the individual needs of students. Students state that they feel safe in school and mutual respect and consideration are a strong feature of relationships between staff and students.

The senior staff are diligent in their attention to all aspects of fire safety and care is taken to ensure that all safety equipment is checked and maintained appropriately. All members of staff recognise their responsibilities to ensure the safety and welfare of the most vulnerable students in their care. Where appropriate a staffing ratio of two adults to one student is provided and students are treated with care and respect at all times. Good attention is given to the development of healthy lifestyles, for example in the nutritious meals provided at lunchtimes. Parents are pleased with the levels of care and safety provided by the school.

Leadership and management**Outstanding**

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The school's proprietors have a clear vision and high expectations of what can be achieved in the personal development and achievement of vulnerable and disaffected students. In the short time since the school opened they have demonstrated the ability to implement their plans effectively, and to inspire and engage students who were previously experiencing a lack of success in their schooling. The proprietors have ensured that the school meets all the independent school regulations. All members of staff are committed to the school's sense of purpose and are proud to be part of the school; they all agree that the school is well led and managed. The breadth of the curriculum is outstanding and fulfils the school's drive for bespoke provision for each individual student. Students have access to a variety of challenging and often exciting experiences which stimulate them to engage and sustain their interest in learning. All of the students who completed a school questionnaire state that they enjoy school and that they feel safe. Similarly, parents and carers who spoke to the inspector or who completed a school questionnaire, state that their children enjoy school and are making good progress.

The school's leaders continuously review the quality of what the school provides and its impact on the progress of each student. As a result, the quality of teaching is consistently good and all students have made good progress in the development of their life skills, the management of their behaviour and in their academic learning. Some individual students have made outstanding progress in aspects of their emotional development, their ability to get on well with other students and adults, and in their reading skills. The quality of relationships between adults and students is exemplary; staff act as effective role models and students show respect for their leadership. Representatives of the placing local authority express confidence in the ability of the school to work effectively with challenging young people. The various premises used by the school are suitable for effective learning and much effort is made to ensure that they present a welcoming and stimulating environment. All the required information for parents and carers is made readily accessible, including details of the school's complaints procedure. Regular communications with parents and carers, including termly written reports, ensure that they are kept well informed. The school's leaders have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and they have planned well for continuous improvement.

It is recommended that the school's request for a material change to extend the school's age range, increase the number of students, add additional premises, and provide for students with autistic spectrum conditions, be agreed.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	139419
Inspection number	422866
DfE registration number	855/6024

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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	Day special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	11–16 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	8
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Independent Educational Services Ltd.
Chair	Leanne Beardmore
Headteacher	Leanne Beardmore
Date of previous school inspection	Not applicable
Annual fees (day pupils)	£36,500–£64,500
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