

Inspection of Independent Educational Services

100 Cross Street, Stockingford, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV10 8JH

Inspection dates: 28–30 January 2020

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?

This is a friendly school where pupils are valued by staff. Pupils arrive having had negative experiences in previous schools. Pupils who have not attended school for a long time say they enjoy coming to school.

Pupils show respect and welcome visitors. Positive relationships are a strength of the school. This helps pupils to settle into the routines of school life well. The small class sizes mean that pupils are nurtured and cared for well. Staff know pupils well. They are quick to act if pupils have problems. Some pupils who have experienced bullying say that staff helped to put this right. Pupils say they feel safe at school.

Although the school has improved since the last inspection, several staff have left. This means the quality of education pupils receive is inconsistent. Some subjects, such as computing and music, are no longer taught.

Pupils generally behave well. Pupils are more interested in their work in some subjects than others. Some pupils struggle to engage in their learning and, for some pupils, attendance is still too low. Teachers work hard to encourage pupils to participate but this is not always successful. These pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

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

Pupil numbers have decreased at the school. Several staff have left since the previous inspection. The proprietors have taken responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school due to changes in the leadership team. They have reviewed the curriculum and made some improvements to the quality of education. However, they are preparing to close the school before the summer term. Leaders are preparing plans for pupils still at the school to help them move on to other providers.

Leaders have considered the curriculum. They have introduced a standardised scheme to cover all areas of learning. Pupils study English, mathematics and science, as well as expressive arts, beliefs and values, and animal care. For some pupils, this curriculum is appropriate and meets their needs well. For others, this work is not challenging enough. For example, in history, pupils completing work on The British Empire are capable of far more than the chosen qualification requires of them. This limits their achievements and does not develop their ability to research or to compare and contrast sources of information.

In mathematics, the work is well planned and sequenced. The subject leader has carefully considered what pupils need to learn and the order in which they need to learn it. This means that learning builds on what pupils already know and can do. Pupils revisit learning often. This helps to develop their resilience. Those who found subtraction difficult were able to show where they had been able to practise their skills. Pupils are proud of their achievements.

Pupils learn about religion and the wider world within the beliefs and values curriculum. This learning helps them to explore differences between themselves and others. Pupils access a range of trips and visits to enhance their learning. Pupils learn about different cultures through theme days, including European and American Day, where they sampled different foods and learned about customs.

The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is newly introduced. Pupils learn about healthy and appropriate relationships, independent living and budgeting. There is a high emphasis on preparation for leaving school and for adulthood. Pupils access suitable impartial careers advice and guidance. They have career plans and can talk about the skills and qualifications they need to fulfil them. The vast majority of pupils who left the school last summer moved on to local colleges.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can access all the subjects on offer. Pupils complete an impressive number of assessments upon arrival at the school. This information forms part of a detailed pupil profile to help teachers understand pupils' needs. Where this is used well, teachers make appropriate adaptations to learning. Consequently, pupils learn and remember more.

The English curriculum is not yet fully embedded. The work in pupils' books shows they understand figurative speech and how to apply it to their writing. However, leaders' curriculum plans are not delivered consistently. Where this is the case, pupils' skills do not build progressively over time.

Pupils told inspectors that they previously enjoyed computing and music lessons. They spoke about their achievements in these areas, including writing a rap and learning to play the ukulele. Unfortunately, teachers of these subjects have left the school and have not been replaced. This means that pupils have not been able to continue with these lessons.

Reading is not prioritised enough. Although reading ages are tested on arrival at the school, the approach to teaching reading is not rigorous. Reading is promoted through assemblies and theme days but it is not systematically taught. Leaders have acted and introduced a standardised scheme. This is not yet embedded.

While pupils' attendance is an improvement on their attendance at their previous settings, for some it is still too low. Work missed due to absence is not routinely followed up. Some pupils have reduced timetables while they settle into school. Teachers provide education at home for these pupils. However, their access to the curriculum is limited as pupils are on part-time timetables for too long and pupils' time at school is not increased quickly enough.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The current guidance issued by the Secretary of State informs the school's safeguarding policy. The policy is available on the school's website and as a hard copy. The high staff-to-pupil ratio means that pupils are well supervised throughout the school day. Staff are vigilant. They have completed relevant training and know how to report concerns. The school has four designated safeguarding leads. They know their responsibilities and take appropriate action. Pupils learn how to keep safe. They know about road safety, stranger danger and how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- The curriculum is not yet planned and sequenced well in all areas of learning and is not always demanding enough. The curriculum does not build progressively on what pupils already know and can do. This limits learning. Leaders need to make sure that the curriculum is well sequenced and that the work set is well matched to pupils' abilities and needs so that pupils can achieve more.
- Some pupils do not attend regularly enough, and others are on part-time timetables. Therefore, they have gaps in their learning. Leaders need to ensure that, where transitional plans and reduced timetables are in place, pupils' time at school increases more quickly.
- Reading is not systematically taught. This is slowing the development of pupils' reading skills. Leaders must prioritise the teaching of reading and ensure that the new reading scheme is properly and successfully implemented.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	139419
DfE registration number	937/6024
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10119222
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	2
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Independent Educational Services
Chair	Shaun Major
Headteacher	Leanne Beardmore
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,000
Telephone number	024 7632 9584
Website	www.independenteducationalservices.com
Email address	info@independenteducationalservices.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–5 July 2018

Information about this school

- Independent Educational Services is a small independent day school for pupils who have social and emotional difficulties. The school offers 15 places for boys and girls aged eight to 19. Many of the pupils have not attended full-time education for a considerable time. All the pupils have an education, health and care plan.

- The school offers places to post-16 students. At the time of inspection, the number of post-16 students was extremely low.
- The school is part of a wider group which also operate two additional schools in the region.
- Local authorities, including Solihull and Leicestershire, place pupils at the school.
- The school is housed in a former medical practice. The school has four small classrooms and a larger hall space. Pupils can access a small secured outdoor space.
- The school was last inspected in July 2018, when it was judged to be inadequate, with several unmet standards. A subsequent monitoring visit took place in October 2019. Several standards around the quality of education remained unmet.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision. Pupils do, however, access local parks and sports facilities with school staff.
- Since the last inspection, several key staff have left the provision. Pupil numbers have also decreased. The proprietors advised inspectors that they plan to close the school before the end of the academic year.

Information about this inspection

We 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.

- The inspection took place over two and a half days. Inspectors held meetings with the proprietors, who are currently acting in a school leadership capacity. The lead inspector also held meetings with those responsible for safeguarding, the special educational needs coordinator and teaching staff. Inspectors spoke with pupils to learn about their experiences of school. Inspectors spoke with a small number of parents and carers.
- Inspectors considered the quality of education. They looked at English, mathematics, beliefs and values, and PSHE education in detail. This involved meeting with subject leaders and teachers, reviewing plans, looking at pupils' books and talking with pupils about their experiences. Inspectors visited several lessons. Inspectors reviewed learning across the wider curriculum.
- Inspectors reviewed a number of key policies and documents. These included the school's safeguarding policy, complaints policy, anti-bullying policy and information about the curriculum. The lead inspector checked attendance, behaviour and bullying records.

- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads and spoke with a range of staff about their understanding of safeguarding procedures. Inspectors also considered staff training records. Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding policy. The school's single central record was also checked.
- Inspectors considered the small number of responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Janis Warren Ofsted Inspector

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