

Inspection of The Valiant School

May Street, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 1EL

Inspection dates: 19 to 21 November 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school with positive relationships at its core and a distinct moral purpose at its heart. Pupils experience a warm welcome, an encouraging word and an unerring acceptance here. They enjoy coming to school because they feel safe and valued.

This is a happy school where pupils are supported very well to improve their behaviour. There is rarely any bullying or unkindness because staff provide consistent boundaries. These are underpinned by a strong focus on restorative practices and the highly respectful relationships between staff and pupils.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These often include social, emotional and mental health needs. The school aims to re-engage pupils with learning and for pupils to return successfully to their mainstream school or to another specialist setting. There is a relentless drive to get next steps just right so that pupils experience success, thrive in areas of their education and pursue their interests and hobbies.

Despite many pupils only spending a short time here, there are high expectations of the effort pupils put into their work. From their starting points at this school, pupils achieve well because staff here provide non-stop encouragement and support.

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

When pupils first arrive, staff take the time to get to know them as individuals. They learn about what motivates and inspires pupils. Staff work alongside pupils' mainstream settings to quickly establish what gaps pupils have in their knowledge and to gain an accurate understanding of their SEND. This careful induction process allows the school to provide a bespoke educational and pastoral offer. It is successful in getting pupils' education back on track and managing carefully pupils' return to their mainstream or specialist settings. This often includes experiencing activities in the mainstream school with which the school shares a site. This proves invaluable for pupils' next steps because it builds their confidence steadily. Regular trips to the library, park and museums also contribute well towards pupils' wider personal development and learning.

The curriculum is broad, engaging and provides pupils with the foundational knowledge they most need. English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education (PSHE) have a high priority but the curriculum extends way beyond these and includes a broad range of other subjects. Careful thought has gone into how the curriculum takes into account the short time pupils spend here. For example, in history, there is more emphasis on learning what it means to 'be an historian' rather than studying particular periods of history in depth. This approach serves pupils well and develops their knowledge of the different subjects.

Pupils join at different ages and with varied previous school experience. Many are at an early stage of learning to read or have basic gaps in their mathematical

knowledge. Staff make timely checks to help them tailor lessons accurately. Daily phonics sessions in small groups or individually help pupils improve their reading skills. These sessions also support to build pupils' confidence and enjoyment of reading. In mathematics, staff provide targeted guidance and break learning down into short tasks, which helps pupils maintain focus. The school uses assessment information to check how well pupils are learning the curriculum. However, sometimes staff do not check and identify how well pupils learn step by step in these subjects. Where this happens, those pupils who find learning particularly difficult struggle and do not learn the important knowledge as securely as they could.

Staff present information clearly and make lessons fun and inclusive. They emphasise routinely the key subject vocabulary pupils need to know. To help pupils to engage and focus, staff are well-trained to provide a breadth of practical ways of presenting the curriculum. In some lessons, staff do not use the available time as effectively in order to practise or reinforce key learning such as phonics knowledge or times tables. This means that the learning and rehearsal of key facts becomes stilted. Consequently, some pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Staff are highly skilled and successful at helping pupils understand and improve their behaviour. When pupils' behaviour falls below expectations, staff quickly intervene to help them put it right. This is done in a sensitive and understanding way. Over time, pupils' behaviour improves significantly.

Pupils are rarely absent. The school is relentless in ensuring this. It expects pupils to attend every single day and most do. The school collects pupils from their homes each day. This provides vital opportunities for staff to speak with parents and carers, which helps foster an effective partnership with pupils and their families.

The proprietor body has diligently ensured that the school consistently meets the independent school standards and is compliant with the equalities act 2012. Careful checks are made of the suitability of staff, which contributes well to the effective culture of safeguarding. Pupils benefit from high-quality resources in a building which is safe and maintained well. Leaders at all levels establish strong working relationships with local schools. There is an outward-looking culture and a desire for continual improvement shared by all. This is illustrated perfectly by the successful professional development opportunities that staff receive in-house and when they visit partner schools. Staff understandably feel valued and are proud to work at The Valiant School.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Sometimes, staff do not emphasise key knowledge in phonics and mathematics effectively. This means that, sometimes, pupils do not acquire this knowledge as securely as they could. The school should make sure that staff make effective use of the learning time available so that pupils' learning of basic phonics and mathematics knowledge is maximised.
- Sometimes, staff do not identify pupils' next steps as carefully and precisely in the core subjects as they could. As a result, those pupils who find learning particularly difficult do not learn the important knowledge securely. The school should make sure that it further develops the ways in which staff assess and monitor small steps in pupils' learning so that pupils make strong progress in the curriculum and from their starting points.

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

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| Unique reference number | 150182 |
| DfE registration number | 861/6041 |
| Local authority | Stoke-on-Trent |
| Inspection number | 10342219 |
| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 13 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | The Valiant School CIC |
| Chair | Jon Lovatt |
| Headteacher | Peter Hogg |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £28,500 |
| Telephone number | 01782 234445 |
| Website | www.thevaliantschool.org.uk |
| Email address | office@thevaliantschool.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- This was the first standard inspection the school received since it opened in September 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school caters for pupils who are at risk of exclusion or have been excluded from other provisions. Places are commissioned by schools or the local authority.
- Pupils spend a minimum of six weeks at this school. It is intended that they return to their mainstream school or move to another mainstream school or to specialist 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 meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- To check compliance with the independent school standards, the lead inspector walked the school site and reviewed associated documentation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, personal, social and health education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum documentation, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with leaders, spoke to members of the proprietor body and to those responsible for governance.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and throughout the day. They spoke formally with pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons.

- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. Inspectors also took account of responses to Ofsted's staff surveys and spoke with groups of staff.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including governors' minutes, school improvement plans and the school's website.
- An inspector spoke to parents and carers at the start of the school day and took account of testimonials provided by parents of pupils who have left the school and some other stakeholders.

Inspection team

Gareth Morgan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mike Cladingbowl

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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