

# Edstart

Independent school standard inspection report

---

DfE registration number	352/6003
Unique Reference Number (URN)	137275
Inspection number	393268
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2012
Reporting inspector	John Coleman HMI

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090070](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090070).

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2012



## **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## **Information about the school**

Edstart is an independent special day school. The school is located on the outskirts of Manchester in a three-storey detached house in a residential area, adjacent to a main road and local shops. It is registered for 25 places for students aged from 13 to 16 years. There are currently 15 students on roll aged from 13 to 16 years. Three students have a statement of special educational needs. One student is in the care of the local authority. The school was first registered on 15 August 2011 and this is the school's first inspection. Edstart provides education for students with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties (BESD). Students often join the school after a history of exclusion and long-term absence from mainstream schools or other special school provision. Students are dually registered at their placing secondary school and at Edstart.

## **Evaluation of the school**

Edstart School provides a satisfactory quality of education for its students. Students make good progress in their personal development and satisfactory progress in their academic learning. The school meets its aims well by ensuring students make significant improvement with regard to their social, emotional and behavioural needs. Students' behaviour and their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are good. Leaders and staff provide satisfactorily for students' welfare, health and safety and arrangements for safeguarding meet all the requirements. The school meets all of the independent school regulations.

## **Quality of education**

The curriculum and other activities are satisfactory in meeting the range of needs and interests of students. The curriculum time allocation provides the minimum number of expected contact hours each week and meets the regulatory requirement. Consequently, the range of opportunities and the breadth of courses are judged as satisfactory. However, the content of the curriculum is mostly well matched to students' needs.

Students are assessed when they initially start at the school. The outcomes of these assessments are used well to personalise the curriculum to the behavioural,

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

emotional and social needs of students. In this way, the requirements for students with statements of special educational needs are met. A course is provided for personal and social development (PSD) leading to external accreditation equivalent to one GCSE. This is particularly well matched to students' needs. Two further programmes are offered in sport and also in public services leading to accreditation with the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC), equivalent to two GCSEs each. Similarly, these courses are well suited to students' interests and aptitudes. Opportunities are made for students to continue with study towards completing GCSE English and mathematics through additional tutoring from teachers at their placing schools. However, most students do not engage in this offer and choose to study functional skills in literacy and numeracy at Edstart. Some units from the Assessments and Qualifications Alliance (AQA), such as in food technology and enterprise, help to broaden the curriculum. Science is provided through the BTEC courses including study of physiology and anatomy. Information and communication technology (ICT) is a regular feature of students' learning in a purpose-built computer suite.

Careers education and guidance is regularly provided through the Connexions service and students appreciate this provision. Out-of-school trips take place every week as a reward for students' good behaviour. Students enjoy collecting reward points towards these trips which have included those to the bowling alley, a ski slope and several local food outlets. The local community is used to enrich and extend the curriculum such as by using local sports facilities and the library. Visitors to school also add to students' experiences and have included the local Member of Parliament and a health worker.

The effectiveness of teaching and assessment are satisfactory in meeting the full range of students' needs. Much of the teaching in the school is good but its impact on students' learning, due to weaknesses in the use of academic assessments, mean that overall, teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection, the quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. The vast majority of teaching observed was good. A feature of all lessons is the excellent relationships between staff and students. Students say they respect and trust the staff and view them as very approachable and very helpful. This quality of relationships strongly aids students' attitudes to learning which are, for the most part, good. In the good and outstanding teaching, staff are energetic and engage students effectively by using a variety of activities which captures students' interest and sustains concentration. For example, in a PSD lesson, students learned about issues of diversity and equality through studying the Paralympics. The teacher quickly gained the students' interest by posing rapid 'true or false' statements; this was then followed by a video clip showing a speech by Nelson Mandela. Immediately, students were given the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and ideas before completing a short written exercise. Satisfactory teaching is characterised by too many teacher instructions, detailed explanations and too little opportunity for students to engage in practical tasks.

Teachers' medium-term plans are detailed with outlined objectives for students' behavioural, social and emotional and academic learning. The precision and impact of the behavioural, social and emotional targets are good and staff use these well to

ensure students make significant strides and improvements. The academic learning targets in specific lesson plans are often too broad and do not take enough account of what students already know and can do. Consequently, in some lessons, all students are set the same level of challenge which, for some, is too low and students find the work too easy. Many of these weaknesses emanate from the way initial academic assessments are used to form Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students. The academic targets set for students' rates of progress in the IEPs are not sharp enough nor do they clearly outline the steps in improvements to attainment over the short-, medium- and long-term expected by the school. To some extent, the positive impact of the school's interventions, whereby some students are withdrawn into one-to-one support, compensates for the lack of challenge in some lessons.

Overall, students make satisfactory progress in their learning. The school's records show that most students make improved rates of progress compared to their often long legacy of underachievement elsewhere. Students say they make good progress. The questionnaires returned from students were unanimously positive about all aspects of the school. A comment from one student, which typified many responses, was, 'I learned more in my first three weeks in this school than I did in the previous three years.' Progress varies between students and, unsurprisingly, the students with the best attendance make the best progress. Inspectors' scrutiny of students' course work shows that, over time, many students have made good progress towards their accreditations. Progress in functional skills is patchier. Given the relatively narrow range of curricular options, and the variations in attendance, students' overall progress is satisfactory rather than good.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Due to the staff's consistent application of the school's very good behaviour management strategies, students make significant improvements to their behaviour which is judged as good. Students increasingly reflect on and self manage their behaviour. Staff are very good role models for students. They show respect, tolerance and understanding of students' needs. In return, students grow in confidence and their self-esteem improves. Students say they enjoy coming to school and many view the school as their second home. They are mostly punctual at the start of the day and attendance rates are significantly improved for most.

Students' social development is aided by the strength of their relationships with the staff. At the start of the day, staff play pool with students and show high levels of interest about their well-being and home life. Students appreciate this concern. Each lunchtime staff accompany students to local shops and advise on healthy choices to which students respond well. Staff take every opportunity to encourage students to develop good manners and social graces. During the inspection, students were courteous to inspectors and freely engaged in discussions expressing very positive views about their school and the staff. Students learn about diversity and community through the programme for public services and the PSD units of work. Overall, cultural development is satisfactory but there are no links with other schools or

communities of contrasting culture in the United Kingdom or overseas. This restricts opportunities for students to learn through first-hand experiences.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The overall welfare, health and safety of students is satisfactory. All the required policies are in place and are implemented to help ensure the safety and well-being of students. Leaders carry out suitable risk assessments and arrangements for safeguarding are appropriate. During the inspection, a few minor outdoor repairs and improvements were made to the premises and small faults were rectified. Communication with placing schools is excellent. Daily attendance returns and very frequent reports about any incidents, together with regular progress meetings, ensure that all parties are well informed about students' well-being and achievement. Staff training in first aid and child protection, including for the designated officer, is up-to-date. The supervision of students is vigilant. Students say they feel safe and are looked after extremely well by the staff. Students learn about healthy lifestyles through the PSD curriculum and are taught about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. There are good opportunities for participation in sport. Effective use is made of external support, such as the educational psychologist. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

All the required safeguarding checks on staff are made, such as those by the Criminal Records Bureau, and are recorded appropriately in a single central register.

### **Premises and accommodation at the school**

Overall, the premises make an effective contribution to the provision for students' learning. The school provides two suitable classrooms. Additionally, there is a good-sized common room and a computer suite. Furnishings and fittings are of an appropriate standard. The standard of decoration is satisfactory but too little is done to improve the quality of classroom learning environments by displaying students' work and providing further visual aids to learning. Outdoors, there is a large hard-surfaced area which can be used for ball games and an attractive grassed area.

### **Provision of information**

The school complies with all requests from Ofsted and the Department for Education for information about the school. Parents and carers are provided with a good range of information. The school has a website which includes helpful information. Reports provide suitable information about the attainment and progress of students.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school's complaints policy and procedures fully meet the requirements.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- improve students' academic progress by:
  - making sharper use of assessments about students' prior learning to specifically target future progress in the short-, medium- and long-term
  - ensuring teaching takes full account of assessments to consistently challenge all students in all lessons
  - improving the quality of the classrooms as a learning environment
  - ensuring that the initial assessments of students' academic attainment fully inform their individual education plans
  - broadening the curricular options
  
- improve the provision for students' cultural development by establishing links with schools and communities of contrasting cultures so that students can learn through first-hand experiences.

## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

### The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
--	--	--	---	--

## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special day school (BESD)		
<b>Date school opened</b>	15 August 2011		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13-16 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 12	Girls: 3	Total: 15
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 2	Girls: 1	Total: 3
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£8,500		
<b>Address of school</b>	Woodville Community Centre 130 Sale Road Northern Moor Wythenshawe Manchester M23 0BX		
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 945 8940		
<b>Email address</b>	james@edstart.org.uk		
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Lowe		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Sporting Start UK Limited, trading as EdStart		

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



5 July 2012

Dear students

### **Inspection of Edstart School, Manchester, M23 0BX**

Thank you for welcoming us into your school when we visited you recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and would like to share with you what we found out about your school. We judged that Edstart School provides a satisfactory quality of education. These are the main reasons why we judged the school to be satisfactory.

- The quality of teaching and the curriculum is satisfactory so that you make satisfactory progress and learn new skills.
- You do very well in improving your behaviour.
- You enjoy school, feel safe and, in particular, you appreciate the efforts of the staff with whom you have excellent relationships.
- You are improving your personal skills which will help you in the future, such as by being cooperative with others.

All schools need to develop and improve and I have asked that the staff improve the progress that you make by extending the curriculum options available to you, by making better use of the school's assessments about your learning and by improving the classroom learning environment. Also, I have asked that you are able to visit and communicate with other students in different types of schools and communities to help you understand what these cultures are like.

Thank you once again for all your help. I wish you well in the future.

**Yours sincerely**

**John Coleman  
Her Majesty's Inspector**