

R.Y.A.N. Education Academy

C/O Concord Youth Centre, Claremont Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham, West Midlands B11 1LF

Inspection dates

6–8 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders have created a supportive and calm environment so that pupils can make good progress socially and academically. They have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders regularly seek support from outside the school to make improvements. This means that the school has improved since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve further.
- Teachers and mentors work effectively so that pupils' academic and social needs are met. This means that pupils can focus on their work and be successful.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because leaders and teachers identify their needs and meet them effectively.
- The governing body supports leaders well. It holds leaders to account and contributes effectively to the strategic direction of the school.
- Leaders' work to promote fundamental British values and pupils' well-being is highly effective and valued by pupils.
- Pupils leave the school with a range of qualifications and accreditations which represent good progress from their starting points.
- All pupils gain places to further their education when they leave the school. However, some of these pupils do not start these further education or training courses.
- Teachers have recently begun to track pupils' academic and personal progress using a single progress file. This is not yet well developed.
- A small number of pupils' attendance and punctuality are weak.
- Leaders have recently introduced an electronic information management system. It is not yet fully embedded.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of pupils who remain in their education, employment and training destinations when they leave the school by:
 - identifying and removing the barriers to these pupils taking up further education or employment and training places that they have on offer to them at the end of Year 11
 - taking actions to increase these pupils' confidence to take up the places they have on offer.
- Improve the attendance and punctuality of a small group of pupils by working even more closely with parents to identify the barriers to good punctuality and attendance.
- Develop the tracking of pupils' personal and social development by:
 - more consistently recording pupils' social achievements outside lessons and in non-qualification subjects
 - encouraging parents and carers to contribute to these records.
- Improve the management of pupils' information so that leaders have a comprehensive overview of different aspects of all pupils' progress by:
 - completing the design of the electronic information management system so that it fully meets the school's needs
 - inputting information into this system
 - training all staff on its use.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have created a school where pupils feel safe, are confident to work hard and make good progress. One parent said: 'What this place offers is hope. In just a few months I have seen a huge difference in my child.' One commissioning school commented: 'The academy offers professionalism, care and the drive to achieve the best possible outcomes for some of the most vulnerable students in the city.' Parents and commissioning schools are highly supportive of the school.
- The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has ensured that all of the independent school standards have been met.
- The headteacher welcomes external scrutiny of her work, pupils' outcomes and safety. She has commissioned an experienced specialist leader of education (SLE) to act as a school improvement partner. This SLE offers challenge and support with lesson observations, and teaching and learning advice. She makes sure that school leaders are fully up to date with new guidance and can share best practice. This has had a positive impact. For example, the SLE has arranged for the school to be a part of a local network of schools, meaning that they can share ideas with other schools and school leaders in the local area.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils spend just over half their time studying a range of qualifications including literacy and numeracy, information technology, science, sports science, physical education, history, creative arts and religious studies. The rest of a pupil's timetable covers personal development, mentoring and careers education. As a result, pupils are able to access a full range of qualifications and accreditations appropriate to their starting points and age. Where appropriate, pupils have access to a range of GCSE subjects to enable them to go on to further study in further education.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on teachers' and mentors' professional development. Staff say that they value this investment in their development. Many staff are also taking further qualifications, for example in management, business administration, leadership, teaching and learning, numeracy and literacy. This means that they are well placed to meet pupils' needs effectively and develop expertise in leadership.
- Leaders' work to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain is very strong. There are high expectations of behaviour and an emphasis on being a part of the school community, and all staff model positive behaviour. They have designed a programme of activities to support this work including multi-faith assemblies and a vibrant religious education (RE) course. Pupils told the inspector that they enjoy this RE course and the work they do on the law, diversity, and personal freedom and responsibility in their personal development lessons. For example, the inspector observed a lesson where pupils were studying rights and responsibilities, and effectively comparing these with rights and responsibilities in different countries.
- Leaders use extra funding for pupils who have special educational needs. They review education, health and care (EHC) plans, turn these into streamlined education plans and provide teachers with the relevant training to meet pupils' needs well.

- Staff record all aspects of a pupil's welfare and progress in a single file. While records are detailed and logical, they mix together different sorts of information. This means that leaders find it time-consuming to isolate behaviour records, for example, so that they can see trends and patterns. To solve this issue, leaders have recently introduced an electronic system to manage all aspects of pupils' information including behaviour, attendance and progress. This is presently running alongside the old paper-based system, but is not yet functioning well enough to be of full use to leaders. This new system's effective introduction is especially important as the school grows in size.

Governance

- Governors effectively oversee the school's work and provide support and challenge for the leaders. They ensure that they are well trained, and this training gives them the confidence to hold leaders to account.
- The SLE attends some governors' meetings. Governors hear her reports and ask questions of her. This means that governors have an independent view of standards in the school and assure themselves that the priorities in the school action plan are appropriate.
- Governors discuss safeguarding in each meeting. They check that safeguarding concerns have been properly and effectively dealt with.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that the safeguarding policy is up to date and available to staff and parents. Parents told the inspector that safeguarding is strong because staff liaise regularly with them so that they know how their child is doing in school, and about their attendance, behaviour and well-being.
- All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The headteacher has an appropriate policy for vetting external speakers and keeps detailed records of who has visited and the content of their work with pupils. Staff are well trained to keep pupils safe.
- The curriculum supports safeguarding very well. Leaders keep detailed records of this so that they can keep track of what has been covered. For example, various external agencies have worked with pupils on issues such as knife and gun crime, violence and gangs, child sexual exploitation, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Both staff and pupils have a good understanding of these issues and pupils remember the key safety messages that have been given.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. Teachers and mentors know pupils well. They are patient and calm with them and talk with them consistently, in a positive way. Pupils say that this makes them feel valued and safe, and motivates them to want to do well.

- When they arrive at the school, pupils have baseline tests and assessments in literacy and numeracy. These are supplemented by full evaluations of a pupil's EHC plan if they have one, information from previous schools and detailed meetings with parents and other relevant healthcare professionals. This helps leaders to build up a detailed picture of pupils' academic attainment, ability, and social, emotional and mental health needs. Consequently, pupils' timetables and support are well matched to their needs.
- All pupils are allocated to a group and level which are appropriate to their stage of learning. Groups are very small and there is ample one-to-one support when it is needed. Groupings are flexible and pupils regularly change groups for different subjects. This means that pupils have support at the right level for them in different subjects.
- Teachers structure lessons well. Pupils are clear about what they are learning and why. In mixed-age and mixed-ability classes, the level of mentor support is high so that pupils are able to make good progress in lessons. Teachers have high expectations and ambition for pupils. They regularly explain why different skills and knowledge are valuable and how they can be used.
- Teachers plan and lead lessons, and mentors support them. Mentors are well deployed and actively seek out where their help is most needed. They are skilled in questioning and behaviour management. This means that the support given by teachers and mentors is seamless. As a result, pupils make good progress over time in lessons.
- Teachers take many opportunities to develop pupils' literacy. For example, they ask pupils to read out loud, use a variety of text types in lessons, and place a strong emphasis on dictionary work, spellings and oracy. As a result, pupils gain confidence in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are aspirational and have well-developed plans for their future. This is because teachers and mentors place a strong emphasis on this. All pupils who spoke to the inspector had well-constructed plans for their further study and life after school.
- The school is a multi-faith community. Pupils have a good understanding of each other's beliefs, and are respectful towards each other. They say that the RE course helps them to understand different faiths, and so understand and appreciate one another's views. As one pupil put it: 'We don't judge, and the way the teachers teach us about diversity is good because it prepares us well for meeting all sorts of different people in the future.'
- Leaders involve pupils in many aspects of the training that staff complete so that their welfare is effectively protected. They have also, for example, had lessons in mental health awareness, forced marriage and examination stress. They have also completed fire safety training including the use of fire extinguishers and minimising fire risk.
- Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in school and that bullying is rare.

- Leaders' approach to pupils' medical needs is effective. Where these needs are identified, all staff undertake the relevant training so that pupils' welfare is supported. For example, all staff have been trained in mental health awareness and support and the use of a defibrillator, and all staff and pupils have been trained in how to deal with epilepsy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are generally orderly and calm around the school. In lessons, almost all pupils work hard and do what teachers ask of them. Pupils who are new to the school quickly begin to meet the staff's high expectations and their behaviour improves. Pupils say that when poor behaviour happens, teachers deal with it well and it is not allowed to disrupt their learning.
- Many pupils have very good attendance above the national average. Most pupils have attendance that is higher than in their previous schools before they began at R.Y.A.N. Education Academy. Parents told the inspector that their children are much more motivated to come to school than in the past because they find the school environment supportive and enjoy making progress.
- A small number of pupils' attendance is not high, mainly for reasons related to their special educational needs. Leaders undertake home visits and use a variety of external agencies to support pupils' attendance, improve their health and well-being, and enable them to attend school more often.
- Those pupils attending alternative provision for part of the week have good attendance. They are making good progress in qualifications that are appropriate for them and engage them well.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- From Year 9, pupils begin to gain accreditations and qualifications appropriate to their starting points and abilities. Leaders have ensured that pupils do the highest level of course that they are capable of. Pupils are well motivated by the successes they see in gaining 'stepping stone' qualifications as they work towards GCSE courses.
- Pupils who are taking GCSE examinations in English and mathematics make good progress. The inspector's scrutiny of pupils' work in these areas showed that they develop their skills in these subjects well, over time. Examination results from previous years represent good progress.
- All pupils in the school have social, emotional, mental health and behaviour issues. Therefore, leaders monitor pupils' progress in these areas through observation and monitoring of attendance, attitude, health and well-being. The school's records and the inspector's observations show that pupils make good progress in these areas. Parents and commissioning schools also say that after they have settled into R.Y.A.N. Education Academy, pupils become more resilient and more able to manage their own conduct. Leaders have recently begun to track all elements of pupils' progress in one file. However, this approach has yet to be embedded.

- Many pupils arrive at the school with weak literacy skills. With the support of a local headteacher, leaders have developed a simple and effective system to track literacy development and improve pupils' skills. Records show that most pupils' reading ages, for example, are improving steadily. Leaders are aware of which pupils still remain behind because they track progress in reading closely and intervene when they need to.
- Some pupils arrive at the school with weak numeracy skills. Following baseline assessments, gaps in pupils' numeracy skills are effectively addressed. For example, pupils who need to learn to tell the time work on their number bonds to strengthen their core numeracy fluency.
- Teachers' work to support pupils' next steps is strong. Teachers support pupils with their applications and make all the appropriate arrangements for interviews including transport. As a result, since the last inspection, all pupils who have left the school at the end of Year 11 have been offered places to go on to further education, employment or training. These are at a variety of other providers and at different levels. However, when they leave the school, some pupils do not have the confidence to take up the places offered to them.

School details

Unique reference number	139706
DfE registration number	330/6014
Inspection number	10033573

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13–17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Number of part-time pupils	5
Proprietor	Catherine Elizabeth Ryan-Harris
Chair	Lilian Kennedy
Headteacher	Catherine-Elizabeth Ryan-Harris
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,000–£25,000
Telephone number	0121 675 8885
Website	N/A
Email address	info@ryaneducationacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 May 2014

Information about this school

- R.Y.A.N. Education Academy provides full-time education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. It is co-located with a youth centre and in addition to various learning spaces, benefits from a recreation room, sports hall and outdoor pitch. The school was previously inspected on 13–14 May 2014.
- The majority of pupils have an EHC plan. All places are commissioned by Birmingham Local Authority or local schools.
- A small number of pupils attend 'Right Trax', an alternative provider, for part of their timetable.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited lessons, evaluated samples of pupils' work, observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and during an evacuation. Compliance with the independent school standards was checked through a variety of activities which included a check of the school and the wider site, and health and safety arrangements.
- The inspector spoke to pupils informally and formally, and a group of staff and senior leaders. Meetings were also held with two senior leaders from other local schools who are supporting R.Y.A.N. Education Academy. Telephone meetings were held with the chair of the governing body and a representative from Birmingham Local Authority which commissions places from the school.
- The inspector scrutinised safeguarding, behaviour and attendance records, and the records on staff vetting.
- Parents' views were evaluated through meetings with four parents and four responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Dan Owen, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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