The Young People's Academy

Falling Lane, Yiewsley, West Drayton UB7 8AB

Inspection dates	21–22 March 2018

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive principal radiates a passion for improving pupils' life chances. Together with staff, she ensures that the school's motto, 'triumph through perseverance', is the foundation for all aspects of pupils' education.

- Since opening as a school, the leadership team has secured swift improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders and staff are ambitious for pupils' outcomes and this is reflected in the challenging work they set pupils of all abilities.

- Governance is strong. Leaders, governors and trustees work together effectively to raise standards and improve the school's effectiveness.

- Staff know individual pupils well. They are skilled in planning activities that are well matched to pupils' needs and which appeal to their interests. As a result, pupils typically make good progress and take increasing pride in their learning.

- The curriculum is well designed. It plays a key role in preparing pupils for their future lives and supporting their development as well-rounded citizens. Equally, the curriculum challenges pupils to achieve to the best of their abilities in a range of subjects, including mathematics, photography and food technology.

- Leaders and teachers share a universal expectation that all pupils will be successful, irrespective of their needs or behaviour. Through bespoke pastoral care and the school's nurturing ethos, pupils' behaviour and well-being improve over time. Pupils are able to increasingly focus on their learning and manage better in school.

- Safeguarding is threaded through all aspects of the school's work. Leaders and staff are highly alert to factors which may adversely impact on pupils' safety and welfare. They take prompt and effective action when concerns arise. Strong partnerships with families and external agencies underpin this work.

- Many pupils join the school with a history of poor attendance. Leaders follow up any absence tenaciously. They work closely with pupils, families and external professionals to overcome pupils' barriers to regular attendance. As a result, most pupils' attendance improves considerably over time. Nevertheless, further work is needed to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged by high levels of absence.

- While overall the curriculum is strong, it does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to deepen their skills and understanding in writing or science. This prevents pupils from making as much progress as they could in these subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of the curriculum to ensure that:
  - in key stage 3, pupils develop their scientific knowledge and understanding through practical tasks and experiments
  - pupils have regular opportunities to write at length and apply their knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling when writing in English and other subjects.
- Leaders maintain their focus on removing pupils' barriers to regular attendance so that pupils make the most of their time in school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management   **Good**

- The executive principal provides strong and effective leadership. In leading by example, she has created an ethos where leaders and staff leave no stone unturned in their work to improve pupils' outcomes.

- Most pupils join the school with negative attitudes to learning and a history of challenging behaviour. Leaders focus unequivocally on ensuring that pupils' needs are fully understood and planned for. They provide high-quality pastoral care which enables pupils to feel secure and increases their willingness to learn. As a result, pupils cope better in school than they have done in the past.

- Leaders continually seek ways to strengthen the quality of education. The basis for this is their comprehensive understanding of what the school does well and what could be improved further. For example, leaders have recently introduced a new system for assessing pupils' social and emotional well-being. As a result, leaders have the information they need to target extra help precisely to pupils' needs.

- The leadership team's drive to improve pupils' well-being and behaviour is matched with high aspirations for pupils' academic outcomes. Through their comprehensive checks on the quality of teaching, leaders have an in-depth picture of how well pupils learn and where is needs to be better. They follow up any concerns effectively to make sure that pupils benefit from the teaching they need to make good progress.

- Teachers are in no doubt about leaders' expectations. They appreciate how leaders' guidance helps them to plan teaching which supports and challenges pupils in equal measure. At the same time, leaders have successfully reviewed the role of additional adults to ensure that they make an effective contribution to pupils' progress over time. Staff morale is high because leaders empower them to devise and adapt strategies that motivate pupils to learn and make good progress.

- Leaders work closely with external agencies, including therapeutic services, to identify how best to promote strong gains in pupils' personal development and learning across the curriculum. Together with staff, leaders keep a close eye on whether the strategies in place have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Leaders and staff are quick to adjust support to ensure that no pupil is left behind. This ensures that additional funding to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is spent astutely.

- Leaders' use of the pupil premium is guided by the principle that 'no two pupils are ever the same'. Disadvantaged pupils receive well-targeted extra support that is tailored to their needs and circumstances. As a result, their outcomes are as strong as their peers'. Similarly, leaders make effective use of the Year 7 catch-up funding to help pupils get off to a smooth start at the school and typically develop positive attitudes to their learning.

- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in all aspects of the school's work. Through the curriculum, pupils explore a diverse range of moral or topical issues, such as the importance of human rights and the implications of such issues as 'airbrushing' in advertising campaigns. Equally, the school's behaviour

policy fosters pupils' understanding of the concepts of fairness and respect. As a result, pupils learn to understand how their actions and words may affect or influence other people.

- The school's broad and stimulating curriculum enables pupils to acquire skills that will serve them well for life beyond the school. This includes their next steps in education, employment or training. Since opening as a school, leaders have paid careful attention to the design of the curriculum. They have introduced a range of new subjects and options to ensure that pupils follow pathways that are personalised to their needs and career goals. This includes GCSEs in photography as well as accredited courses in mechanics and construction. This approach has been pivotal in increasing pupils' motivation to succeed and aim high. Nevertheless, leaders recognise that the science curriculum in key stage 3 requires further development. Currently, pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their understanding through experiments and investigations.

- In their design of the curriculum, leaders have placed due weight on ensuring that pupils develop age-related skills and understanding in English and mathematics. Pupils' progress in these subjects is typically strong because leaders ensure that teachers identify and address any gaps in pupils' basic skills. Nevertheless, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length, either in English or in other subjects. This hinders them from making as much progress as they could in their writing skills.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body has a thorough understanding of the school's work. Governors visit the school regularly to check that leaders' actions are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Similarly, they contribute well to leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and ensure that leaders prioritise their efforts on the areas in need of most attention.

- The work of the trust has been instrumental in enabling leaders to secure a good standard of education. The trust provides leaders and staff with well-focused training and professional development programmes in order to improve their leadership and teaching skills. Staff at all levels are overwhelmingly positive about how this has increased the effectiveness of their work. They particularly value how leaders and trustees have supported their career goals, including obtaining qualified teacher status.

- The trust's oversight of operational matters related to finance and building maintenance is strong. Leaders are able to draw on expertise within the trust to find solutions to issues that arise, for example by reorganising classroom spaces to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Through its astute support and challenge, the trust allows leaders to maintain their focus on raising standards and improving teaching.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- The culture of safeguarding is strong because leaders and staff share an in-depth understanding of the risks that pupils may face in the wider community, including those related to gang involvement, drug abuse and child sexual exploitation. Leaders

and staff maintain high levels of vigilance and do not hesitate to act on concerns that arise.

- Leaders reflect carefully on how pupils' needs may impact adversely on their well-being. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable about how best to identify and support vulnerable pupils, including those who may be suffering with mental health difficulties. As one member of staff put it: 'Leaders ensure that we are well prepared to respond effectively to anything that worries us about a pupil's welfare.'

- Strong communication between leaders, families and external agencies contributes well to the culture of vigilance. Leaders and external professionals have the information they need to decide what action is needed to protect pupils and prevent situations from escalating. Leaders follow up on agreed actions tenaciously, and are ready to challenge families and external agencies in the best interests of pupils' safety and well-being.

- Leaders and staff encourage pupils to continually reflect on whether their choices or actions may increase their vulnerability to harm or abuse. As a result, pupils understand what might constitute unsafe or risky behaviour and how they can prevent themselves from being drawn into situations that are potentially unsafe.

- Leaders and staff follow up on pupils' absence rigorously, including home visits where necessary. They work closely with families and external agencies to establish why a pupil is not in school and that pupils are safe during any periods of absence.

- Leaders carry out all the necessary checks to ensure that adults are suitable to work in the school. Signs around the building remind staff and visitors what they must do if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare. Leaders review the safety of the site regularly and take effective steps to make improvements when necessary.

- Pupils told inspectors that adults keep a close eye on their safety and welfare and that an adult is always available to talk to them if they feel unsafe or worried. The school's own survey of parents' and carers' views shows that they typically agree that their children are well looked after in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment   Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.

- Across a range of subjects, teaching balances high expectations with strong pastoral support. Through this combination, pupils begin to experience success and re-engage with their education.

- Leaders and staff have an in-depth picture of the needs, interests and abilities of each pupil. They use assessment information effectively to plan tasks that enable pupils to build well on their prior learning. At the same time, teachers celebrate what pupils can do well and explain how they could do even better. This helps pupils to grow in confidence and expect more of themselves than they have done in the past.

- Teachers know exactly which strategies to use to reduce pupils' reluctance to start or persevere with the work set. Pupils told inspectors that they appreciate how teachers 'explain things clearly' and give them 'lots of encouragement' when they need it.

- Teachers and adults are skilled in selecting resources that appeal to pupils' interests. When pupils lose concentration, staff are quick to adjust resources or activities so that

pupils refocus on their learning. Pupils typically respond positively and promptly to adults' guidance. Sometimes, pupils struggle to follow classroom routines, particularly those pupils who have recently joined the school. When this happens, adults intervene quickly and calmly to ensure that the learning of others is not disrupted.

■ Staff typically have strong subject knowledge. They use questioning effectively to clarify or extend pupils' understanding of the concepts or knowledge taught.

■ Mathematics teaching is characterised by a strong focus on ensuring that pupils acquire age-related skills and knowledge. At the same time, teachers set pupils demanding problems which deepen their understanding of key concepts.

■ In English, teachers' use of high-quality texts reflects their aspirations for pupils' outcomes. For example, Year 7 pupils study the Charles Dickens novel 'Oliver Twist'. Teachers plan activities that stretch pupils' thinking and help them to understand the meaning of the texts they read. However, the curriculum does not give due emphasis to the development of pupils' writing skills. Sometimes, teachers do not expect pupils to apply their knowledge of punctuation and spelling when they record their ideas. This prevents pupils from producing high-quality and accurate writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good

Personal development and welfare

■ The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

■ Leaders and staff give pupils' emotional well-being and mental health the utmost priority. Leaders recognise that what works well for one pupil may not prove successful for another. Together with staff and external agencies, leaders devise and implement bespoke programmes of support for each pupil. These typically include well-targeted additional therapy. As a result, pupils are increasingly able to manage their emotions and behaviour as well as ask for help when they need it.

■ Adults are excellent role models in the kind and respectful way in which they speak to pupils and manage their behaviour. They provide clear and consistent boundaries which help pupils to feel secure and well looked after. Pupils told inspectors that staff listen to them and treat them with respect.

■ When a pupil's behaviour has been unacceptable, staff support them to identify how their actions or words may have hurt or upset other people and what they might do to 'put things right'. This encourages pupils to develop respectful and empathetic attitudes to others.

■ Through effective careers guidance, pupils are well informed about the options available to them when they leave the school. Partnerships with external agencies and charities play an important role in this work. For example, in conjunction with a national charity, the school organises 'employability' days where pupils experience what it is like to work in fields such as hospitality or engineering.

■ Leaders pay close attention to promoting pupils' physical and emotional well-being through regular exercise. For example, in partnership with a national sports charity, pupils take part in regular rugby sessions which build both their self-esteem and

physical fitness.

- Over time, pupils begin to value their education and display more positive attitudes to learning than has been the case in the past. In many cases, pupils require intensive support and encouragement from adults to sustain these positive attitudes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils typically join the school with challenging and unpredictable behaviour. Leaders and staff waste no time in securing swift improvements in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Pupils try hard to conduct themselves sensibly and to avoid behaving in a way that poses a risk to their own safety or that of others.

- Adults invest time in understanding the reasons for a pupil's behaviour and what it might tell them about a pupil's emotional well-being. Staff are highly attuned to signs that a pupil is feeling distressed or is struggling to cope. They are skilled in de-escalating situations. Without compromising their duty to keep pupils safe, adults manage challenging behaviour calmly and with respect for pupils' dignity.

- Staff record and monitor incidents of unacceptable behaviour, including bullying and the use of racist or homophobic language, thoroughly. Behaviours that may have been ignored in the past are now recorded and managed appropriately. Consequently, leaders have the information they need to spot and reduce any patterns in poor behaviour, in a cohort or at an individual level. School records show that leaders' work has paid dividends. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour have reduced considerably since the school opened, as has the number of fixed-term exclusions.

- Many pupils have a history of poor or erratic attendance at their previous settings. Leaders use a range of strategies to reduce levels of absence, including celebrating good attendance in newsletters. Pupils spoke positively about how leaders and staff help them to develop better habits of attendance. Overall, the school's work typically secures considerable reductions in pupils' absence levels. However, leaders recognise that pupils' attendance needs to be even better if they are to make the most of the education the school provides.

Outcomes for pupils	**Good**

- Work in pupils' books and school assessment information show that pupils' progress is strong in a range of subjects. All groups of pupils achieve equally well, including the most able, girls and those who are disadvantaged.

- Pupils' starting points on joining the school vary considerably. Almost all have considerable gaps in their skills and knowledge due to extended periods outside of school. Consequently, attainment is typically low in a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics. Over time, high-quality teaching ensures that most pupils make up for lost ground, particularly in mathematics and reading.

- Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment. By the end of key stage 4, the vast majority of pupils attain qualifications and accreditation that reflect their abilities and career aspirations. This includes GCSEs in

subjects such as mathematics, English, science and art. Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to ensure that the vast majority of pupils secure suitable college or training places when they leave the school.

■ Through effective partnerships with mainstream schools, the most able pupils benefit from teaching which challenges them to attain the standard of which they are capable. Pupils' outcomes are particularly strong in mathematics, food technology, art and photography because teaching and the curriculum inspire them to aim high.

■ Pupils develop key life skills that prepare them well for life outside of school. For example, pupils learn to cook their own meals and understand what constitutes a balanced diet. This fosters pupils' self-esteem and sense of independence.

■ Staff keep a close eye on how pupils' behaviour or attendance impact on their academic outcomes. When pupils are absent or do not complete a task well, teachers use their 'catch-up sessions' to prevent pupils from missing important learning and, in turn, developing further gaps in their skills and knowledge.

■ Pupils' outcomes in writing and science are not as strong as those found in the other subjects they study. Leaders recognise that they need to develop the curriculum in these subjects so that pupils routinely make strong gains in their skills and knowledge over time.

School details

Unique reference number	141382
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10041952

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emlyn Lumley
Executive Principal	Laurie Cornwell
Telephone number	01895 446747
Website	www.ypacademy.org.uk/
Email address	reception@ypacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

■ The school caters for pupils who have severe and often complex SEN and/or disabilities, primarily related to social, emotional and mental health needs. A small proportion of pupils also have a diagnosis of communication and interaction difficulties, including autism.

■ Almost all pupils have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. The school does not make use of alternative provision.

■ The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above the national average.

■ The school opened in April 2015 as a sponsor-led academy within the Orchard Hill College Academy Trust (OHCAT). The trust operates a number of schools which cater for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

■ The executive principal also leads The Skills Hub, which is a local alternative provision within the OHCAT trust.

Information about this inspection

- In order to evaluate the school's effectiveness, inspectors held meetings with the senior leadership team, members of the local governing body and representatives from the OHCAT trust.

- Inspectors also reviewed a range of documentation related to safeguarding, the curriculum and pupils' outcomes, including information on pupils' attendance and behaviour.

- Together with senior leaders, inspectors visited classrooms across the school as well as the school's off-site provision for mechanics and physical education. Inspectors also reviewed work in pupils' books with senior leaders.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and conduct during visits to lessons and throughout the school day, including social times and on pupils' arrival at school.

- A meeting was held with a group of pupils to discuss their views on the school. Inspectors also considered the school's own survey of pupils' views.

- Inspectors met with a group of staff and spoke to them informally about the school's work over the course of the inspection.

- No responses were received from staff or pupils to Ofsted's online questionnaires.

- Inspectors gathered the views of parents through telephone discussions with a small number of parents. They also took into account the school's most recent survey of parents' views. There were too few responses to Parent View (Ofsted's survey for parents) to draw meaningful conclusions. However, inspectors considered three written comments received via Parent View.

Inspection team

Sarah Murphy-Dutton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mary Geddes	Ofsted Inspector

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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