

Inspection of V.A.S.E Academy

Oakland Young People Centre, Oakland Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, West Midlands B21 0NA

Inspection dates: 29 June and 1 July 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attend the school following long periods of absence from formal education. The majority enjoy coming to school. They say this is because they feel that the staff care about them and want them to do well. Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive and supportive. Pupils say they feel safe at school. They say that bullying is rare. They are confident that staff will help them to resolve any problems.

Developing pupils' personal development is a key strength of this school. Pupils genuinely enjoy the range of opportunities and meaningful trips they are able to undertake. For some, this is the first time they have experienced social activities and made genuine friendships. They say that school teaches them to respect one another and appreciate that we are all different.

Leaders set out the best intentions through the curriculum; a wide range of subjects are available. They want pupils to do well. Pupils who engage well with what the school offers learn more and remember more. A few pupils do not attend regularly enough and are often late. This sporadic attendance and inconsistent engagement mean that pupils do not do as well as they could.

Staff mostly help pupils to behave appropriately. They set high expectations and reinforce these. Pupils say that behaviour is generally good. On occasion, however, negative behaviour interrupts learning. A few pupils choose to leave their lessons and struggle to re-engage. This has a negative impact on how well pupils achieve. Work that they have missed as a result is not routinely followed up, leading to gaps in learning.

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

Leaders and all staff are aspirational for all pupils. They want pupils to leave school with meaningful qualifications. While curriculum plans are ambitious, delivery of learning is not yet consistently strong. This means that pupils do not always gain the knowledge they need to achieve well.

In subjects that are well organised and well planned, teachers identify what pupils need to learn and when they need to learn it. This means that learning is logically sequenced; pupils learn more and remember more. Where this is not the case, planned learning is not connected to what pupils are already able to do. This limits pupils' ability to build on their existing knowledge.

In English, teachers identify misconceptions well. They know what pupils need to learn and they make sure this is taught and revised regularly. They adapt plans to make sure key learning is revisited if needed. Pupils routinely practise spelling and punctuation and learn how to apply grammatical rules correctly. As a result, pupils who engage well make gains in their learning. Some pupils who have recently left the school achieved appropriate qualifications.

Pupils arrive as reluctant readers. Staff spend time building relationships with pupils to learn about their interests and choose books they know pupils will enjoy. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud. With teacher support, some pupils can access more-difficult words. This is not yet consistently embedded across the school.

In subjects that are not as well planned or organised learning is disconnected and does not help pupils to learn and remember more. In history, teachers develop pupils' chronological skills through a timeline. This is not planned sequentially. As a result, pupils' knowledge of the order of events that shaped history is not secure. This limits their understanding of the past. In mathematics, learning does not always follow a logical sequence. This is problematic for pupils who miss sessions because they do not consistently catch up with work missed. This leads to gaps in pupils' understanding.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum captures the ethos of the school well. Pupils learn about relationships, staying physically and mentally healthy and keeping safe. Teachers adapt the curriculum to reflect local issues such as gang and knife crime. The school places high emphasis on acceptance and tolerance. Pupils who met with the inspector said they felt happy and comfortable at school.

Learning opportunities extend beyond the traditional classroom. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a strength of the school. Leaders have carefully considered the benefits of outdoor education and combined this with character development to develop an 'adventure curriculum'. Pupils take part in animal care, country walks and gardening projects. They also learn about survival skills, camping and bushcraft. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their achievements. These experiences enhance the classroom sessions and help pupils to develop resilience and self-confidence.

Behaviour and attitudes to learning are variable. A small number of pupils struggle to remain in classes for prolonged periods of time. This leads to missed learning and on occasion disruption to others' learning. While leaders set high expectations, some pupils do not engage with planned supportive strategies. The school's current behaviour policy does not meet the needs of all pupils

Attendance for some pupils is sporadic and too low. While the school has systems in place to follow up absence, for a few pupils this is not effective and does not improve attendance over time. Pupils do not consistently catch up on work they have missed. This leads to gaps in knowledge.

The proprietor and those responsible for governance ensure that the school meets statutory requirements. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. All independent school standards are met.

The proprietor, who is also the headteacher, sets out a clear vision for the school and aspirations for pupils. This has a positive impact on the experiences of some pupils; however, this is not yet consistent across the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safeguarding policy adheres to the current guidance from the Secretary of State and is published on the school's website. Paper copies of the policy are also available. There are two designated safeguarding leads who are appropriately trained and take their responsibilities seriously. The school is small, which means that all staff know pupils well. They are quick to recognise if something is not right and they follow up on concerns quickly.

Leaders and all staff know the context of the school well. They are aware of localised risks and make sure that they teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. They know what to do if they are worried about the welfare of a child.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some areas of the curriculum the content has not been planned sequentially. In mathematics and the humanities curriculum content is not taught in a logical order. This means that pupils do not develop their knowledge as well as they could. In these subjects, leaders should identify the key knowledge that pupils need, and the order in which it needs to be taught, to make sure that pupils build a secure understanding.
- A few pupils do not engage with behavioural expectations outlined by the school. This can be disruptive and has an impact on the learning of others. Leaders should ensure that the behaviour policy meets the needs of all pupils and supports them to improve their behaviour.
- Attendance for some pupils is too low. Sporadic attendance and lateness impacts on pupils' learning. The current attendance policy and procedures do not bring about improvements quickly enough. Leaders should review the attendance policy to ensure that attendance and punctuality improve.
- Work that is missed due to non-attendance or lateness is not routinely followed up. On occasions, where learning for the class has moved on, it is difficult for pupils who have been absent to make links to what they have previously learned. Leaders should ensure that pupils catch up on missed learning.

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	147702
DfE registration number	330/6134
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10195167
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Muhammad Majid
Chair	Mohammed Zahed
Headteacher	Muhammad Majid
Annual fees (day pupils)	£15,000 to £60,000
Telephone number	0121 5514882
Website	www.vaseacademy.co.uk
Email address	info@vaseacademy.co.uk

Information about this school

- V.A.S.E. Academy is an independent day school situated in Handsworth, Birmingham. It is based within the Oakland Community Centre, where it occupies a number of classrooms as well as having access to a sports hall and outdoor space. The school opened in September 2021. This is the school's first inspection.
- The school offers places to pupils aged 11 to 16 who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and social, emotional and mental health difficulties. A number of the pupils have education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- The school does make use of two alternative providers. These providers are not registered with Ofsted.

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.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- The inspection was carried out over two-and-a-half days with notice of one day.
- Inspectors held meetings with several staff including the headteacher, who is also the proprietor; school leaders; teaching staff and the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator. The lead inspector met with pupils and made telephone contact with a representative of the governing body. A number of responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for pupils and staff were also considered.
- Inspectors considered the quality of education using the deep dive methodology. They looked in more detail at English, mathematics, history, physical education and PSHE. This involved discussing curriculum areas with school leaders and subject teachers, reviewing work in pupils' books, speaking with pupils and visiting lessons.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. The safeguarding policy and key documents were scrutinised. The school's single central record was checked.
- Several policies, and documents, were examined including policies relating to the curriculum, behaviour, attendance and complaints.

- Inspectors accessed key documents including bullying and behaviour records, the school's admissions register and attendance registers.

Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Ashley Ofsted Inspector

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, 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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021