

Inspection of R.Y.A.N Education Academy

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

Inspection dates: 16–18 November 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this school. They are extremely well looked after. Leaders and staff are deeply committed to helping pupils succeed. Pupils' personal development comes first. All staff help pupils develop the knowledge, skills and personal qualities they need to be successful in life.

Leaders want each individual pupil to gain the qualifications they need for future training, education or employment. They ensure that the courses pupils complete are accredited. Pupils work hard at their studies.

Leaders invest in their pupils. They purposefully build into the curriculum visits to museums, team building activities in local parks, and meals in restaurants. These experiences help prepare pupils for life.

Most pupils who join the school have previously experienced difficulty and disruption to their education. Pupils say that this is the best school they have been to. They feel valued and accepted here. Adults listen to pupils and help sort out any problems. They work with pupils to create a calm environment where everyone is respected. Bullying is extremely rare and dealt with very quickly by staff. Parents and carers speak highly of the school. They say that staff have rescued their children and given pupils real hope for a successful future.

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

The proprietor believes in the pupils' success. She is ambitious for them and is determined to improve their life chances. She has skilfully appointed a very strong staff team. Staff are well-trained and have the skills needed to work in this environment. They are experienced, patient and calm. The proprietor ensures that specialist advice to support pupils is secured. Leaders, teachers, mentors and external staff, such as the school nurse and educational psychologist, work effectively together. There is a shared vision that leads to positive experiences and outcomes for all pupils.

Highly effective personal development is at the core of the curriculum. Staff help pupils to be aspirational and consider what might be possible in the future. Bespoke curriculum plans such as 'knowing oneself' are in place. Pupils learn to manage their behaviour and recognise how they are feeling. They develop pride in their achievements and begin to plan for their future. Staff support pupils to gain a range of appropriate qualifications.

Provision for careers education is strong. Step by step, staff help pupils to develop a carefully crafted personal statement and curriculum vitae. This opens doors for future training and employment.

Everything leaders and staff do is about helping pupils to succeed and get ready for the future. During the inspection, several pupils secured college places and were excited about their future prospects.

Leaders ensure that pupils access a broad range of subjects. Pupils improve their knowledge and skills in the core subjects of English, mathematics and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils have lots of opportunities to discuss what they are learning. Staff thread speaking and listening into every curriculum activity. They use weekly reading sessions to widen pupils' vocabulary and help them comprehend what they are reading. Teachers regularly ask pupils to read in different subjects.

Leaders have a clear rationale for what they want pupils to learn. This shapes the curriculum in subjects such as history and religious education. Essential knowledge is clearly identified and sequenced. Subject leaders are highly enthusiastic and well informed. They know how to plan and teach lessons that engage pupils and keep them focused. Staff support pupils with managing their behaviour, alongside helping them to learn and remember. Pupils are offered time out with adult support if they experience behavioural challenges in the classroom. Staff expect pupils to return to their learning and complete it at a later point. This is a delicate balance for staff to manage.

The PSHE curriculum is very carefully planned to address the needs and circumstances of the pupils. Leaders have implemented fully the statutory guidance on relationships and sex education and health education. Physical well-being is viewed as important as mental health. Pupils enjoy the range of sports on offer such as badminton and Zumba. Staff skilfully support pupils to learn about positive, healthy relationships. Pupils learn to respect different opinions. They explore different cultures and talk confidently about similarities and differences. Staff handle sensitive issues and discussions extremely well.

Leaders create bespoke curriculum plans to meet the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of individual pupils. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Leaders know exactly what makes each pupil tick and how best to support them in their development. Pupils who have experienced trauma and disturbed learning are very effectively supported.

The proprietor works tirelessly to provide a well-organised, safe place where pupils can learn. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. All health and safety requirements are met. The proprietor works closely with the landlord to ensure that the premises are maintained to a suitable standard. The proprietor has ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.

Governors bring a wealth of experience and skills to their roles. They support leaders and offer advice when asked. Minutes of meetings show that governors ask questions to clarify their understanding. However, they do not challenge leaders on decision-making as much as they should. For example, their understanding of the

school's funding is not as deep as it could be. They are keen to further develop their knowledge of the school in aspects such as finance and resourcing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's safeguarding policy, which is available to parents, reflects the most recent government guidance.

Everyone who works here has the pupils' best interests at heart. They make sure that keeping pupils safe is at the forefront of their work. Leaders and staff are fully aware of the risks pupils face, such as child sexual exploitation and knife crime. Through honest, open discussions, staff help pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils learn not to walk with both headphones in, and how to question what they read and see when using social media.

All staff are well trained and report concerns quickly. Leaders are tenacious in following up any concern.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Governors are supportive but do not sufficiently challenge or hold leaders to account. They do not always ensure that pupils have the best resources. Leaders should continue to develop the skills and knowledge of governors so that they hold leaders to account and check the use of the resources available to the school.
- Due to the nature of pupils' difficulties, behaviour management takes precedence. Occasionally this delays pupils' learning. Leaders should continue to support staff with the balance of managing behaviour and promoting pupils' learning so that pupils make strong progress in all subject areas.

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.

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	139706
DfE registration number	330/6014
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10205093
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Catherine Elizabeth Ryan-Harris
Chair	Lilian Kennedy
Headteacher	Catherine Elizabeth Ryan-Harris
Annual fees (day pupils)	£28,000 to £30,000
Telephone number	0121 675 8885
Website	www.ryaneducationacademy.co.uk
Email address	info@ryaneducationacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–8 June 2017

Information about this school

- R.Y.A.N. Education Academy provides full-time education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All the pupils who attend have an EHC plan. All places are commissioned by local authorities.
- The school is co-located with a youth centre and, in addition to various learning spaces, benefits from a recreation room, a sports hall and outdoor pitch. The school was previously inspected on 6–8 June 2017.
- The school does not currently use any alternative 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the proprietor/headteacher, the deputy headteacher and subject leaders. The lead inspector spoke with the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, history and PSHE. The deep dives consisted of visits to lessons, discussions with leaders and teachers, discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also talked to pupils more generally about their experiences in school. They observed pupils at breaktimes, spoke to them at the start of the school day and saw them at work in a range of lessons.
- Inspectors talked with staff to discuss how they are supported to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including school policies, curriculum documents and the school's website.
- In checking safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised documentation, and looked at the school's processes for reporting concerns and the checks that leaders make on staff prior to employment.
- Checks were made relating to the independent school standards, including checks on the school's premises.
- Inspectors considered the seven responses to the staff survey. The lead inspector held telephone discussions with two parents.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mike Onyon

Ofsted Inspector

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