

Inspection of The Young People's Academy

Falling Lane, Yiewsley, West Drayton UB7 8AB

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are not making sure that this school is a safe, orderly and pleasant place for pupils to learn and develop. This stands in the way of pupils achieving the high expectations leaders say they have for helping them to get ready for leading purposeful, independent future lives.

Pupils use a building that is poorly maintained. They witness offensive graffiti when moving around the school. Some pupils persist in damaging the premises; staff say that walls and windows are often broken again as quickly as they are mended.

Leaders ensure that pupils have lessons about staying safe online. However, some pupils do not follow the behaviour expected of them. For example, some openly defy staff by playing an unsuitable computer game in front of them or keeping their mobile phones when they are not supposed to.

Some pupils do not feel safe and say that they are frightened by the violent and aggressive behaviour they see in classrooms. Leaders' records show that bullying and abusive behaviour among pupils is common.

Sometimes, staff get hurt when supporting pupils who are finding it difficult to behave appropriately. However, despite this, the staff who spoke to inspectors feel positive about the school and their work. They want the best for pupils and are placing high hopes in the proposed move to the new school building.

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

Leaders and staff want pupils to succeed, but are not effective in ensuring that there is an orderly and well-managed environment in which pupils can thrive and learn. The recent turbulence in senior leadership, challenges in recruiting and retaining staff, and the poorly maintained premises are all limiting the capacity of leaders to secure the necessary improvements.

The curriculum has been planned with a clear purpose in mind. Subject leaders make sure that the intended content of lessons is taught. The use of remote learning is built into curriculum plans. Teachers have picked up unexpected gaps in pupils' knowledge that are due to the COVID-19 pandemic and have adapted the curriculum to take account of these. However, there is too much variation across subjects in how staff consider and clearly set out the exact knowledge and skills they intend pupils to learn. Subject leaders do not know enough about strengths and weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge to help leaders identify what subject-specific training should be offered to staff.

Lessons are often disrupted because of poor behaviour. Leaders have resorted to locking classroom doors from the outside to deter pupils from wandering into lessons other than their own. Pupils shared mixed views about the school. Pupils'

work and teachers' notes show that there are gaps in pupils' learning due to this regular disruption and disengagement.

Staff know a lot about the needs of pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They use this knowledge to decide how to explain new ideas and make use of lesson time. However, this does not make lessons appealing enough to prevent some pupils from regularly deciding to opt out of activities. A small number of pupils are not attending school at all and are taught by sending work packs home instead.

Leaders and staff work hard and in a well-organised way to provide activities that broaden pupils' interests and develop new skills. Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities to try, for example, circus skills, fishing and chess.

Leaders are mindful of the pressure placed on the well-being of staff in teaching pupils with significant social and emotional needs. They have ensured that several staff are trained as mental health first-aiders. Staff are confident that leaders make sure that staff have time away from pupils during the school day to work together on planning and discussing the curriculum and pupils' needs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

All pupils need support for their emotional and mental health needs. However, they attend premises that are so poorly managed that this undermines their personal development and well-being. As a result, there are too many instances of pupils' abusive behaviour at school. Pupils regularly witness or become involved in aggressive or destructive acts that make some feel very unsafe. Leaders have been unsuccessful in putting an end to pupils absconding from school and becoming at risk of harm as a result. Leaders make sure that records and communications about pupils known to social services are well organised and they promptly seek external help when necessary.

Some aspects of safeguarding are more positive. For example, leaders engage well with outside agencies to ensure that support is provided for pupils and followed up effectively. They also engage with external agencies when there are any concerns raised about staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- All pupils have significant social and emotional needs. Despite this, leaders do not make sure that the premises are maintained well and that graffiti and litter are removed promptly. Leaders should urgently ensure that the premises are

improved and better managed, so these support rather than detract from pupils' personal development and well-being.

- There are too many instances of unacceptable behaviour among pupils. Some pupils do not feel safe, and staff have come to believe that they should expect to experience this type of behaviour from pupils. Leaders should urgently ensure that the implementation of the behaviour policy leads to a prompt and sharp reduction in unacceptable and dangerous pupil behaviour.
- Some pupils abscond from school, leaving them at risk. This can involve them using physical force to break through locks. Other pupils witness unacceptable, aggressive behaviour. Leaders should urgently tackle these concerns so that pupils stay safe within secure areas of the school and comply with the agreed school policies.
- Subject leaders do not consistently ensure that the sequence in which pupils learn different components of skills and knowledge is well considered across the whole range of subjects. Leaders have not identified gaps in teachers' subject knowledge sharply enough to help them decide what staff training to prioritise. Leaders should ensure that the reasons for the way in which the curriculum is organised are clear to all staff, and provide subject-specific training based on a thorough review of gaps in staff's subject knowledge.

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 school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	141382
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10215987
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jay Mercer
Principal	Nicola Stephens (Interim Principal)
Website	www.ypacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 and 22 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The interim principal has been leading the school since September 2021. The previous principal left the school in the summer term of 2021 after less than a year in post. The trustees are currently recruiting for a permanent principal.
- Several teaching posts are currently being filled by agency staff, and two senior leaders are absent due to maternity leave.
- All pupils have SEND related to behaviour, and emotional and social needs. They all have an education, health and care plan.
- A new school building, adjacent to the existing premises, is under construction. Trustees expect this to be ready by spring 2022 and are applying for the school to reopen with a wider age range and greater admission numbers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. They deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and design technology. During these, they sought pupils' views, looked at pupils' work, visited lessons, spoke with leaders about curriculum plans and held discussions with teachers. They also viewed curriculum plans and lessons in some other subjects.
- Meetings were held with the interim principal, the chief executive officer of the Orchard Hill College Academy Trust and the deputy chief executive officer.
- Inspectors conducted tours of the school with senior leaders and talked with pupils at the start of the school day in breakfast club.
- Inspectors looked at records related to safeguarding and behaviour. They examined the records of checks leaders have made on the suitability of staff. They also viewed records of checks leaders have made or have arranged on the premises.
- Inspectors spoke by telephone with three parents whom school leaders said wished to speak with Ofsted, and they also considered a written comment from a parent.
- It is recommended that the school does not appoint early career teachers.

Inspection team

Andrew Wright, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Samantha Ingram	Her Majesty's Inspector
Brian Oppenheim	Her Majesty's Inspector

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