

Inspection of JP Alternative Education

Shooting Butts Centre, Penkridge Bank Road, Rugeley, Staffordshire WS15 2UB

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

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 enjoy coming to JP Alternative Education. They appreciate the time staff spend getting to know them. Leaders recognise that, in the past, many pupils have not had a positive experience of school. Staff work hard to build trusting relationships with pupils. Consequently, pupils feel safe here and re-engage with learning.

Pupils generally behave well. In lessons, there is a calm and orderly atmosphere. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and make a reasonable attempt to complete their work. Leaders do not tolerate bullying. When incidents do occur, they take swift action to ensure it stops.

The curriculum enables pupils to study a range of different subjects. This includes vocational qualifications in motor vehicle and hospitality and catering. However, the curriculum is not well planned and sequenced in all areas. This does not help pupils remember more of what they are taught.

Leaders provide an extensive number of outdoor activities. Many pupils take part in climbing, bushcraft, mountain biking and water sports. Pupils value these opportunities to take part in new things and work together as a team.

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

Leaders are committed to ensuring that all pupils are successful. They focus on developing pupils' knowledge in English and mathematics so that they can achieve qualifications in functional skills. Leaders also provide further opportunities for pupils to study for qualifications in finance education, fitness and physical activity and other vocational courses.

The curriculum at key stage 4 is well structured. Leaders have thought carefully about the order in which topics are taught and how pupils build on their prior learning. Teachers assess pupils quickly when they arrive at the school to identify gaps in knowledge. They adapt and modify the curriculum in order that pupils develop a secure grasp of some basic skills before moving on to more complex ideas. In this way, pupils make progress in their learning given their low starting points.

This is not the case in key stage 3. Leaders have not thought about the order in which pupils learn a subject. In mathematics, for example, teachers are working through a textbook of topics without considering how these may link together to help pupils make connections in their learning. Furthermore, pupils in English are not developing a full understanding and appreciation of different novels, poems and plays. Teachers do not plan opportunities for pupils to revisit learning. Leaders recognise this and have plans to develop the key stage 3 curriculum further.

Teachers provide daily opportunities for pupils to read. This includes recapping letters and some basic sounds. However, staff have not had training on how to support weaker readers. As a result, staff do not accurately identify where younger pupils have gaps in their phonics knowledge. Therefore, they do not provide the precise support pupils need to improve their reading skills.

Leaders care deeply about pupils' well-being. They have made sure that all pupils have a key worker who supports both their academic and personal development. Because of this, pupils form strong positive relationships with staff. However, leaders have not ensured that staff have all the information they need to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The information on learning plans is not broken down or shared fully with staff. Consequently, some pupils' needs go unmet, and pupils' progress is not as strong as it could be.

Pupils' attitudes overall are positive. They interact with staff well and are generally polite and respectful. However, sometimes pupils use inappropriate language. They do not always speak in a way that is suitable. Leaders recognise this and are working to support pupils to modify the way that pupils communicate.

Leaders have put in place a clear programme for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Pupils work towards a qualification in PSHE and build their knowledge and understanding in a range of different topics. Pupils learn about issues such as consent, healthy relationships and contraception in an age-appropriate way. They also learn about protected characteristics and the Equality Act 2010. In addition, pupils develop their understanding of money management through lessons in finance education. Leaders supplement pupils' classroom work with visits from external speakers. Pupils value the opportunity to share, discuss and debate their ideas. Leaders are aware that the PSHE curriculum could be further strengthened so that pupils have a better understanding of fundamental British values and other cultures and religions.

Leaders provide a range of information and guidance relating to future careers. Pupils complete an employability qualification that helps to support them with their curriculum vitae writing and interview skills. Leaders also provide opportunities for pupils to visit local colleges and have taken pupils to a local careers fair at the NEC Birmingham. Some pupils have been able to undertake work experience. Leaders are keen to develop pupils' first-hand experience of the world of work.

Pupils take part in many different educational trips. During this academic year, pupils have visited London, the Staffordshire military museum, RAF Cosford and the Walsall leather museum. Some pupils have also been on a two-and-a-half-week visit to Scotland as part of a wild camping expedition. These activities help to provide pupils with a range of experiences that many have never had before.

The proprietor body is passionate about its role. It puts pupils at the centre of its work and ensure all decisions are taken in their best interests. Parents and carers are highly complimentary about the support their children receive. Staff enjoy working at the school. Leaders have ensured they are compliant with schedule 10 of

the Equality Act 2010. However, leaders are not monitoring and evaluating all aspects of their work. This does not always help them to pinpoint areas for development to help the school improve. Despite this, the school meets all of the independent school standards. The proprietor body has plans to strengthen leadership with the formation of a governing body.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding policy is available to parents on request and is compliant with the latest government guidance. Staff have a strong understanding of individual pupils. This means that they are alert to any changes in pupils' behaviour that may suggest a child is at risk or needs support. Staff are clear about what they should do if they have a concern about a pupil or a member of staff and where this should be recorded. Leaders ensure that pupils get the help and support they need in a timely way. They liaise closely with local authorities and external agencies. Leaders recognise that their safeguarding recording system could be enhanced to make retrieval more efficient.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe through the PSHE curriculum, including on topics such as gang and knife crime.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The key stage 3 curriculum is not well planned and sequenced. This means that teachers do not effectively build on what pupils already know. In addition, pupils do not get opportunities to revisit their learning. Leaders should ensure that the key stage 3 curriculum is well structured so that pupils know and remember more of what they are taught.
- Staff do not support pupils who have weak reading skills effectively. Staff do not identify the gaps that pupils have in their phonics knowledge, and there is not a clear reading curriculum in place to help them catch up. Leaders should ensure that all staff are trained effectively in the teaching of early reading so that pupils are able to access more of the school curriculum.
- Leaders have not shared the information in SEND learning plans with all staff. This means that some targets are not met sufficiently well. Leaders should ensure that all staff have a full understanding of pupils' learning needs so that they can adapt their teaching and support appropriately.
- Some pupils struggle to behave and speak appropriately. This means that some use derogatory language that impacts on the positive learning environment that leaders have established. Leaders should continue to support pupils in helping them to speak and behave appropriately to prepare them for life beyond school.
- Leaders are not fully checking and evaluating all aspects of their work. This means that they are unable to take effective action to address the most important

areas needing development. Leaders should ensure that they carefully monitor and evaluate all aspects of their work so that they can help the school to improve.

How can I feed back my views?

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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	148248
DfE registration number	860/6084
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10220440
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	10 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Number of part-time pupils	35
Proprietor	JP Alternative Education Limited
Chair	Julian Porter
Headteacher	Julian Porter
Annual fees (day pupils)	£125 to £275 per day
Telephone number	01889 582864
Website	None
Email address	info@jpae.uk

Information about this school

- The school was registered by the Department for Education on 26 April 2021. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- The school caters for pupils who are at risk of exclusion or have been excluded from another school.
- All pupils who attend the school have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school does not use 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 of the school.

- Inspectors met with members of the proprietor body, including the headteacher. Inspectors also met with teachers, teaching assistants and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, PSHE, mathematics and motor vehicle. For each deep dive, inspectors considered the school's curriculum documentation, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about their wider experiences of school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies, risk assessments, attendance information and behaviour logs.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's procedures for recruiting staff, the quality of staff's training and the procedures that are in place to keep pupils safe. Inspectors also considered the suitability of the school buildings and leaders' work to reduce the risks that had been identified.

Inspection team

Mark Howes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alexander Laney

Her Majesty's Inspector

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