

Inspection of R.E.A.L Independent Schools Ilkeston

Gallows Inn Playing Fields, Nottingham Road, Ilkeston, Derbyshire, Derbyshire, DE7 5BB

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils have experienced difficulties in previous educational settings. Staff know pupils and their backgrounds well. They care about each pupil as an individual. Parents and carers appreciate this. One parent said: 'Education is now a positive experience for my son who is happy and progressing well.'

Staff help pupils regulate their behaviour. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens. Staff deal effectively with any incidents of bullying by helping pupils reflect on the impact of their actions. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive. Pupils say they feel safe and supported.

Staff ensure that pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are catered for well. Leaders ensure that pupils' needs, as identified in their education, health and care (EHC) plans are met.

Pupils enjoy their experiences at this school, such as celebrating Pride week, trips to the theatre, canoeing, and meeting Titus, the dinosaur. They gain from a range of opportunities that support their personal development. They develop self-confidence and resilience. They are well prepared for their next steps. Pupils gain qualifications that will help them be successful in their lives.

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

Leaders have ensured that pupils, including post-16 students, benefit from a broad, well-planned curriculum that meets individual pupils' needs and interests. The curriculum allows pupils to achieve GCSEs, and functional skills and vocational qualifications.

In most subjects, the curriculum has been carefully sequenced. For example, in mathematics leaders have ensured that teachers know what to teach and when. Teachers break knowledge down into smaller blocks. This helps pupils to connect and build knowledge more quickly. Teachers help pupils to recall knowledge through questioning and recap sessions. Pupils then practise and build on previous learning.

Some subjects are not as well sequenced. Some teachers' subject knowledge is not as secure as it needs to be. As a result, pupils do not build on their knowledge over time as effectively as they could.

Leaders ensure that teachers consider the targets contained in pupils' EHC plans when planning what to teach. Teachers' plans help pupils work towards these targets. For example, in vocational learning teachers give pupils opportunities to communicate with others when they work as part of a team.

Teachers deliver individual phonics teaching to pupils who are at the early stages of reading. They use books that contain the sounds that pupils know. Pupils use their phonics knowledge to become more accurate readers. Pupils who are more

confident choose their own books and are becoming more independent readers. Leaders are aware that more needs to be done to ensure that a love of reading is promoted in all subjects.

Most pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. Staff use a consistent, calm and positive approach to managing behaviour. They know the potential triggers that may affect pupils' behaviour. They intervene before situations escalate.

Pupils' attendance and behaviour improve when they join the school when compared to their previous school or setting. Leaders support and challenge parents if pupils do not attend regularly.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils learn about different aspects of physical and emotional health and well-being. There are many chances for pupils to learn about the potential risks they may face in their lives. This includes issues around online safety, alcohol, smoking, drugs and extremism.

Leaders have developed an age-appropriate relationships, sex and health education curriculum. Pupils learn about diversity and equality. They recognise British values, such as democracy. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. Some struggled to recall detailed information about different religions. Nevertheless, they know the importance of respecting those whose beliefs, opinions and values are different from their own. Pupils receive impartial careers advice and guidance. This helps to prepare them for their next steps. Pupils enjoy raising money for national charities. They benefit from activities that support older people in the local community.

Senior leaders and the governing body work together effectively so that the school meets the independent school standards. This includes those related to schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school website. Leaders understand the school's strengths and priorities for improvement.

Leaders make sure that risk assessments are in place to help keep pupils and staff safe. Inspectors identified two unmet standards in relation to site maintenance. Leaders took prompt action to ensure that these standards were met by the end of the inspection.

Staff said that leaders are supportive and considerate of their well-being and workload. They are proud to be part of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand the additional vulnerabilities that many pupils have. Staff receive training on the latest safeguarding guidance. They quickly identify signs that a pupil may need additional support, and they respond accordingly. Records of the actions leaders take are detailed and of high quality. Leaders work with external agencies to

make sure that pupils get the help that they need. Leaders check the well-being and safety of pupils who learn off site.

Leaders have appropriate procedures in place to manage any allegations about staff's conduct. Governors fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities well. They regularly check the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding systems.

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

- In some subject areas staff's subject knowledge is not strong, particularly where it is outside of their teaching specialism. Pupils do not achieve as highly as they should in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the necessary knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum well.
- Leaders have put in effective strategies to help pupils to learn to read. However, they have yet to secure a culture that encourages a love of reading. As a result, not all pupils read widely or voluntarily across the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that they prioritise reading so that all pupils value the opportunity to read across a range of subjects.

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	147664
DfE registration number	830/6050
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10204908
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	R.E.A.L. Education Limited
Chair	Adrian O'Malley
Headteacher	Nikki Purcell
Annual fees (day pupils)	£30 570 to £50 950
Telephone number	01158 220 400
Website	www.realindependentschools.org
Email address	enquiries@real-education.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- R.E.A.L. Independent School Ilkeston is an independent special school. The proprietor of the school is R.E.A.L Education Limited.
- The school is registered to provide full-time education for pupils who have additional learning needs or social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school uses five unregistered alternative providers at different sites that provide a range of practical and vocational courses. Four of these are run by the proprietor but are separate to the school.
- This is the school's first standard inspection since the school opened in January 2020.
- There are currently 27 pupils on the school's roll. This is below the number that the school is registered for. The facilities and provision are sufficient to care for and meet all the pupils' needs.

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 has received since the COVID-19 pandemic. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school's leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and other members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with the head of health and safety, the chair of the proprietor body and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, reading, mathematics, personal, social and health education and vocational learning. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector spoke to leaders of vocational provision over video conference as part of the deep dive. He visited two of the alternative provision sites attended by pupils and spoke to staff and pupils.
- Inspectors heard pupils read books during phonics sessions.

- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors took note of the responses received on Parent View and considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors met with several groups of pupils to gather their views.
- To judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors read the school's relevant policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and met with the safeguarding leader. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered relevant documentation and reviewed the school facilities to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Stephen Long, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Aileen King

Ofsted Inspector

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