

Inspection of Red Kite Academy

Purbeck Drive, Corby, Northamptonshire NN18 0BX

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are at the heart of all decisions made at this school. Staff care about all their pupils. Pupils say they feel safe. Leaders ensure that staff have the expertise to meet pupils' needs effectively. Pupils say they enjoy school and would not change anything, even if they could. A typical comment from pupils was 'this school is amazing'.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. The school's mission statement is 'helping people, living in extraordinary circumstances, to live ordinary lives'. Leaders ensure that everything pupils do is preparing them for adulthood. Staff know their pupils well. There is a personalised approach to caring and learning.

Pupils behave well. Staff provide effective support to pupils who may display challenging behaviours. Staff respond well to any incidents of such behaviour. They support pupils to use strategies to manage their own behaviour. Bullying is not tolerated. If it does happen, leaders deal with it swiftly.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly happy with the care their children receive. One parent's comment, which was typical of many, was, 'This is an amazing school, with friendly, helpful staff. This school invests in our children's whole future rather than just academically.'

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to achieve the best they can, no matter what. In planning the curriculum, leaders have carefully considered the wide range of needs pupils present with. Leaders have identified four different curriculum pathways to meet these needs. The curriculum for the early learners is well designed and builds on knowledge pupils should know over time. Leaders are still in the early stages of developing some of the wider subjects for the formal pathway.

Effective communication and language are a priority for leaders. They recognise the importance of giving every child a voice. Teachers focus carefully on the pupils' education, health and care plan (EHC plan) targets. These are broken down into smaller steps. Most pupils successfully achieve their expected outcomes.

Teachers adapt their teaching to ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils. They regularly check how well pupils are achieving in all subjects. Teachers check pupils' understanding before introducing any new learning. This helps to ensure that pupils understand what they have been learning. Some pupils struggle to remember what they have learned in previous lessons.

Leaders have prioritised supporting those pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. Teachers use a phonics programme to support these pupils to learn to read. All staff have had training to teach phonics. Books are well matched to the

phonics pupils know. Most pupils can use their phonics knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words correctly. Children in the early years enjoy listening to adults read to them. All pupils say they enjoy reading. They have access to a wide range of books, including sensory stories for pupils with complex needs.

Students in the sixth form have good attitudes to their learning. The curriculum for these students is well planned. They have options to choose preferred courses. All students have access to work experience placements. Students have careers events and guidance to help them to make choices about their future. This prepares them well for their next steps. Students' destinations when they leave the school include further education, adult social care packages and employment.

Pupils have some understanding of difference. They do not have a good enough understanding of religion and other cultures. Pupils know about some of the British values. They have the opportunity to vote for pupils to become members of the pupil council. There are roles available for pupils to apply for. These include 'charity champions' and 'reading room' monitors.

There are several opportunities which support pupils' personal development. Some pupils take part in enterprise schemes. Pupils enjoy learning in the forest school and visiting places of interest in their local community. Older pupils have the opportunity to develop their travel training skills and confidence.

Leaders use pupils' own motivation to develop their interests and talents. Pupils who like small animals can volunteer on a farm for their work experience, for example. Some pupils enjoy taking part in the young voices event. Leaders are proud of pupils becoming 'curling champions' in the local area.

Leaders, many of whom are new to role, know how the school should improve. They receive effective support and challenge from governors, who know the school well.

Staff are proud to work at this school. Most staff say leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All staff know there is a collective responsibility to keep pupils safe. Staff receive regular training and safeguarding updates. All staff know how to raise concerns about pupils' welfare. Leaders ensure that pupils get the right support when they need it. They work well with external agencies. Leaders go above and beyond for their families.

Staff ensure that they raise pupils' awareness of safeguarding risks. Pupils know how to ask for help should the need arise. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that they consistently identify what pupils on the formal pathway need to learn and when in studying the wider curriculum. Pupils do not always get the chance to build on what they have learned before in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that there is clarity around what these pupils need to learn and remember in the wider curriculum, so that all pupils have the opportunity to recall and deepen this knowledge.
- Some pupils' knowledge of different faiths and cultures is limited. As a result, they are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be. Leaders should ensure that pupils have the necessary knowledge and understanding of different faiths and cultures, to ensure that they have a comprehensive understanding of difference in society.

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.

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	145906
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10254746
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy free school special
Age range of pupils	4 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	7
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Scott
Headteacher	Karen Smith
Website	www.redkitespecialacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Red Kite Academy is a specialist school for pupils with autism spectrum disorder, physical disabilities, severe learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional, and mental health difficulties.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- A new headteacher took up her post in January 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chief executive officer, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, representatives of the trust, trustees, and the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors undertook deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, communication and language, and music. Inspectors met with subject leaders, teachers and groups of pupils. They visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- The lead inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding procedures, including the single central record and child protection and safeguarding policies. She met with the designated leaders for safeguarding.
- The lead inspector met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development, looked-after children, pupil premium, attendance, and the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors considered responses recorded on Ofsted's Parent View survey, including free-text comments.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff gathered through meetings with groups of staff and responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in lessons and observed behaviour in lessons and during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including documents relating to the school's self-evaluation, school improvement, attendance and behaviour, the curriculum, and governance.

Inspection team

Anita Denman, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Wood

Ofsted Inspector

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