

Inspection of Unity Academy

113 Forest Road West, Radford, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG7 4ES

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The executive headteacher of this school is Elizabeth Browne. This school is part of Raleigh Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sean Kelly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Eileen Hartley.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attend a range of off-site provisions for their education. They usually study at one or two settings that are carefully chosen to help pupils re-engage with their education.

Staff have high expectations of pupils. Most pupils gain qualifications in English and mathematics and other academic and vocational subjects. Their time at Unity Academy helps pupils to move on to purposeful destinations when they leave.

Pupils behave well in lessons and within the various settings. Staff manage pupils' behaviour skilfully and teach them how to conduct themselves in different situations. Staff and pupils enjoy positive and productive relationships.

Most pupils have much better attendance at Unity Academy than they did at previous schools. Staff use a range of strategies to help to promote regular attendance. However, some pupils are still absent too often.

There are clear procedures in place to help pupils stay safe. They all have trusted adults to talk to if they have any concerns. Pupils are confident that staff would deal with any problems that they may have. Pupils feel safe in the settings. They learn about local, national and international safeguarding issues that help them to make informed choices about reducing risk.

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

Unity Academy accurately identifies and meets the needs of the pupils who attend the school. Pupils benefit from an appropriately tailored curriculum that allows them to prepare for future learning and adult life. The curriculum is designed to give pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, the knowledge and the cultural capital that they need to succeed.

The trust has invested significantly in staff training and literacy resources. Reading is now prioritised to allow pupils to access the full curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly. They read out loud in class, read in groups and to members of staff on an individual basis. Over the last few years, each setting has concentrated on helping every pupil to improve their reading. There is now a sharp focus on helping those who are at the early stages of reading get the support that they need to catch up.

The curriculum is having a positive impact on pupils. It is meeting their academic and social and emotional needs. Since the last inspection, a greater proportion of young people have moved on to college, apprenticeships, training and employment.

Pupils are well prepared for adult life and future learning. Across the settings, pupils receive high-quality careers education. They are aware of their different options and

understand how behaving appropriately and achieving qualifications will help them to access opportunities in the future.

The school works with providers to ensure that they have clear behaviour systems in place. Staff manage behaviour effectively and use rewards and sanctions appropriately. Consequently, pupils behave well in their tailored learning environments. There are demonstrable improvements in the behaviour of pupils who have particular needs.

Improving attendance is a high priority for the school. Staff track the attendance of each pupil closely. They meet every week to discuss the barriers to regular attendance and put in support. Staff work closely with outside agencies and the local authority to address issues and the 'AP Task Force' use bespoke strategies to reduce absence. As a result, many pupils have significantly improved attendance since joining Unity Academy. The trust's central attendance and welfare team have provided effective support in this area.

Pupils benefit from a range of personal development opportunities that promote fundamental British values and spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. However, as these activities are not tracked and planned across the providers, not all pupils receive the full impact of these rich experiences.

Staff from Unity Academy regularly check the quality of provision across the different providers. They use the information that they collect to provide additional support, guidance and training to help the providers develop their practice.

Governance has improved since the last inspection. The trust and members of the Trust Interim Executive Board (TIEB) use their knowledge, training and experience to hold leaders to full account. Those responsible for governance ensure that the school has a clear vision and strategies, that resources are well managed and that Unity Academy fulfils its statutory duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils are absent too often. This means that they do not receive the good-quality education that Unity Academy provides. The school should continue to work with pupils, families, outside agencies and providers to remove barriers to regular attendance.
- Not all pupils access the rich experiences that promote personal development across the providers. Consequently, some pupils miss opportunities to broaden

their horizons. Unity Academy should monitor and track the various activities and ensure that all pupils experience a wide range of activities that promote personal development.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	144023
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10298513
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision sponsored
Age range of pupils	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Eileen Hartley
CEO of the trust	Sean Kelly
Executive Principal	Elizabeth Browne
Website	www.unity.raleightrust.org
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 September 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- All pupils receive their education at off-site alternative providers. These provisions are four independent schools, two free schools and fourteen unregistered alternative providers.
- The executive principal assumed this role in January 2023.
- The trust board introduced TIEB to replace the local governing body in January 2023.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive principal, other leaders, a group of staff from Unity Academy and leaders and staff from the alternative providers visited. The lead inspector met with the chief executive and three members of the TIEB, including the chair, and spoke to a representative from the local authority by telephone.
- Inspectors visited eleven alternative providers. Six of these were unregistered. The lead inspector also spoke to representatives of three other alternative providers. Two of these were unregistered.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, personal, social and health education and a range of vocational subjects. For each deep dive, where it was possible, inspectors looked at curriculum plans, held discussions with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met formally with pupils and spoke with pupils in their lessons and around school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of the governing body and documentation relating to behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors took into account surveys the school had conducted with pupils and parents.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Donna Moulds	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Halcro	His Majesty's Inspector

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