

Inspection of Yardleys School

Reddings Lane, Tyseley, Birmingham, West Midlands B11 3EY

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected

Ofsted has not previously inspected Yardleys School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Yardleys School to be outstanding before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Yardleys School is a unique and special place. Staff have built an inclusive and cohesive community. They put pupils' best interests at the heart of all they do. Everyone is valued, and pupils attend happily, safely and with pride. One member of staff summed this up by saying, 'We know the pupils and look after them as we would our own children.' This is true.

Leaders and staff insist that pupils behave and attend exceptionally well. Pupils rise to this challenge. Pupils learn what excellent behaviour looks like, and staff model this daily. Staff act promptly if pupils' behaviour should dip but do this with kindness and care. They take firm and decisive action, apply sanctions consistently and help pupils to reflect on their mistakes. Staff are alert to any instances of bullying and act immediately. Pupils are treated fairly and consistently by their teachers.

Pupils benefit from a rich and diverse education. There are extensive opportunities for them to develop new talents and interests. Every Wednesday afternoon, the school community comes together in a diverse enrichment programme. Pupils can choose from an abundance of activities, from learning to knit and caring for an allotment to practising nail design. This strengthens the togetherness of the school community and cements relationships between staff and pupils.

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

The headteacher leads with integrity, vision and unwavering commitment. Trustees and senior and middle leaders possess a wealth of insight and expertise, coupled with creativity and flair. Leaders care deeply about staff. They are mindful of well-being and workload, and staff feel valued and appreciated. All staff share a strong moral purpose and live by the 'Yardleys charter'. These values of positivity, integrity, curiosity, resilience, empathy and reflection are ever present. Pupils reflect these values, and therefore Yardleys School is a fantastic place to attend.

Pupils follow a wide-ranging curriculum that prepares them well for their next steps. Leaders have broadened the range of subjects that pupils can study at key stage 4, and they have put the English Baccalaureate at the heart of the curriculum. This means that more pupils will learn a modern foreign language and can study a greater range of creative and practical subjects.

Subject leaders have crafted detailed and ambitious subject curriculums. They have set out the overarching aims and have carefully sequenced the detailed knowledge that pupils will learn. They have done this to a consistently high quality. For instance, in mathematics, leaders have fashioned a curriculum that enables pupils to connect mathematical ideas from different facets of the subject. All teachers then contribute to the ongoing evolution of the curriculum. Leaders draw on their strong subject knowledge and give them time to contribute their ideas and expertise. This

means that all teachers know exactly what they are teaching and when they should be teaching it.

Teachers deliver the curriculum well. They choose and share resources that help pupils learn. They explain new concepts clearly and make checks on pupils' past learning. Pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour mean that lessons are purposeful and productive. However, there are some instances where pupils do not fully grasp the concepts taught. This means that new, important knowledge is not learned and understood in sufficient detail. Subsequently, when teachers ask pupils to complete recall activities, pupils struggle to remember such knowledge, as they did not securely understand it when it was first taught.

Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They share this information with staff and check that it is being used in lessons. Leaders want pupils with SEND to follow the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. They have made progress towards this aim.

Many pupils speak English as an additional language. Leaders have therefore prioritised pupils' speaking and reading. Pupils who need help with their phonics knowledge get this support from well-trained staff. Staff work relentlessly to encourage all to read. Leaders have introduced daily guided reading. During these sessions, all pupils read a class text that has been carefully selected. Staff deliver these sessions with gusto.

Pupils benefit hugely from a comprehensive personal development curriculum that is rooted in the school's values. This is high quality, both in its construction and its delivery. At its centre are sessions taught by teachers to their form group. Leaders have taken great care to ensure that teachers have the training, knowledge and resources to do this expertly. Staff deliver these sessions consistently well. The extensive range of pupil leadership opportunities, trips and visits, as well as the exemplary enrichment programme, nurtures pupils' interests and develops their strength of character. This, alongside a thorough and detailed careers education, means that pupils are exceptionally well prepared to contribute to life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Safeguarding leaders have the expertise and knowledge to carry out their roles effectively. Staff know how important it is to report any concerns about pupils promptly. Leaders then act immediately to make sure that pupils are safe. They take thorough and appropriate action.

Leaders actively seek external help and support for pupils and families when needed. They are tenacious in following this up if they feel that pupils require more

support. Staff do all they can to provide support and act with pupils' best interests at heart.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not consistently ensured that the ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum is delivered to all pupils so that they secure sufficient knowledge and understanding at the first point of learning. As a result, pupils are sometimes asked to remember and use prior learning that they have not securely understood. Leaders should ensure that all pupils know and understand the important building blocks of learning when they are originally taught so that they can then practise recalling and using these to further build their understanding.

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	139994
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10256874
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	942
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jean Helme
Headteacher	Neil Warner
Website	www.yardleys-vle.com
Date of previous inspection	25 and 26 February 2020

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 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.

- 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 that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator.

- Inspectors spoke with members of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, science, modern foreign languages, geography and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's extra-curricular activities, enrichment programme and personal development curriculum with leaders.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils, formally and informally, at various points in the inspection. They took account of responses to a pupil survey, a staff survey and Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with safeguarding leaders.

Inspection team

Ian Tustian, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Tim Bassett	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Beech	His Majesty's Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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