



Yardleys
School
WORKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER FUTURE

INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES

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“This outstanding school exemplifies the very best in educational provision, showing that young people can achieve exceptionally well, irrespective of circumstances that for many would put them at risk of failure” – Ofsted 2010

Context and basic information

Yardleys School is a highly successful mixed 11-16 comprehensive and stand-alone academy serving an area of high socio-economic deprivation. Yardleys is a multi-cultural school which reflects the diversity of the local community. 97% of the students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with English not as first language currently stands at 83%. The school also has more boys than girls (57% to 43%) on its roll. The school has a much higher than the national average number of students who are eligible for Pupil Premium.

Overall standards and reputation

The school has an excellent reputation both locally and across the city. This is reflected in the school being significantly over subscribed with a further increase in demand in recent years.

The school is highly focused on raising standards of pupil achievement and is successful at doing so. Yardleys is consistently in the top 20% of schools nationally and last data (2022) showed a progress 8 score of +0.34 despite the average attainment of students arriving in Year 7 being well below the national average. The progress of pupils is also above the national average in most subjects including Maths, English and Science. The achievement of boys and disadvantaged pupils have improved in recent years to above the national average.

The school was judged ‘outstanding’ in 2010 and was inspected in February 2020. This Section 8 inspection focussed on pastoral care, behaviour and safeguarding. We were delighted that Yardleys continues to be an outstanding school with inspectors highlighting a wide range of strengths and positive features.

There are well established and effective leadership roles and pastoral systems. This has resulted in a very well ordered school and where indicators such as attendance and exclusions are all better than national averages.

Other indicators of high standards include:

- Positive feedback from staff, pupils and parents
- High staff retention
- A well organised school
- Excellent standards of financial management and regulatory compliance

Vision and values


The school has two mottos; firstly the traditional words of ‘*Keep Troth*’ (*keep faith*) – which can be seen on the traditional school badge – signifies the school’s longstanding determination to foster belief and resilience in our young people. The second - ‘*Working together for a better future*’ - again identifies the ethos of collaboration but also the very clear ambition to continually improve the school, the life chances of our pupils and the wider community.

As well as the overall mission the school has three key aims which informs its work:


- i. To achieve academic excellence
- ii. To educate the whole child
- iii. To work collaboratively and ethically to deliver the highest standards of education

At the heart of everything that we do as a school community are our values of Positivity, Integrity, Empathy, Curiosity, Resilience and Reflection. These together with our three school rules of being 'Ready, Respectful and Responsible' are encapsulated in our Yardleys School Charter.


Yardleys School Charter




Staff & Students believe everyone at Yardleys School should:





- show **positivity** and enthusiasm;
- be motivated & have high expectations of ourselves & others;
- be **curious** and ready to learn new things;
- be fully prepared for all activities with everything you need;
- communicate with others regularly and effectively;
- have excellent attendance and punctuality;
- be well presented and smartly dressed;
- show **resilience** when faced with challenges

 **Be Ready**




- recognise that we are all equal individuals;
- have regard for each other's personal space and privacy;
- take care of the building, equipment and the environment;
- be polite, considerate and kind to everyone;
- communicate in a calm and polite manner;
- actively listen to others;
- appreciate others' beliefs, opinions & cultures;
- show **empathy** and maturity when dealing with sensitive issues

 **Be Respectful**





- be safe and look after each other;
- complete work on time and to a high standard;
- behave well with **integrity**: even when no-one is watching;
- be a positive role model and representative of the school;
- recognise that we are responsible for our own actions;
- be fair in your treatment of others;
- give our full effort to everything you do;
- reflect** on all that we do and learn from our mistakes


 **Be Responsible**


Leading to Academic Excellence and Personal Development


WORKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER FUTURE



Positivity


Integrity


Curiosity


Resilience


Empathy


Reflection

School leadership and governance

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprises seven members: Headteacher, three Deputy Headteachers, three Assistant Heads and an Academy Business Manager. SLT members are highly visible around the school and proactively support children and adults alike. The senior team recognise the vital importance of both being organised and communicating regularly with staff. To this end they hold a daily briefing with all staff where notices, reminders and public 'thank you's are shared every morning. School leadership and management is viewed very positively by staff.

There is also a wealth of experienced and effective middle leaders including Heads of Department/Subject, Heads of Faculty and Heads of Year. The school has moved towards more distributed leadership with some of these middle leaders having whole school responsibilities.

The school is a stand-alone academy having chosen to convert in 2013. The Trustees recognise the important distinction between governance and management and work tirelessly to ensure the success of

the school. Trustees also regularly visit the school to see first-hand different aspects of the school in action.

School leaders and trustees have identified several key priorities for the future development of the school including:

- Re-establishing normal school life and standards after the prolonged disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic
- To use the OFSTED template of 'intent, implementation and impact' to further develop the curriculum, particularly academically and at subject level
- To further improve standards of pupil safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, motivation and personal development
- To ensure the continued sustainability of the school through effective management of staffing, school finances and other resources

Staffing

One of the main factors in the sustained educational excellence at Yardleys can be attributed to the expertise, commitment and hard work of all staff. There are currently 104 members of staff including 66 teachers.

There is a distinct and highly valued ethos of collaboration and mutual support which makes Yardleys a special place to work. Another key feature at Yardleys is how all staff are respected and treated by both children and colleagues regardless of their role or position. Teachers understand the important role that support staff play in organising and managing issues away from the classroom, which allows them to focus on their classroom teaching and how this significantly reduces their workload.

The School places high importance on the training and professional development of all staff, particularly those new to the School. This includes an induction, mentoring, weekly training sessions and subject collaborative planning. Performance management is far more focused on improvements in teaching practice rather than just exam results. The School has consistently achieved Investors in People status, currently holding the Gold Award.

The Academic curriculum

The curriculum shares the same aims as the school, which means a focus on working collaboratively to provide an excellent academic education for all that educates the whole child.

Academically there is a broad and balanced curriculum in place. Subjects such as DT, Media Studies and RE are popular and successful choices for many pupils. All pupils study the three separate sciences rather than a combined course at GCSE and we hold a strong belief in the power of studying a language and the range of EBacc subjects.

At the core of the curriculum are the individual subjects and departments that sit within faculties. These are highly effective and well-led with subject teams who are well qualified and experts in their fields. Consequently, there are very good standards of teaching and learning across the curriculum. Across all subjects we place high emphasis on **knowing more, remembering more and doing more.** **Learning substantive and disciplinary knowledge** is a central tenet of learning and intelligence including the acquisition or development of skills. It also provides **cultural capital** to our pupils which again helps them in later life.

There is a school-wide focus on reading and literacy. All pupils start the day with a 25-minute guided reading session led by form tutors in which they will read 3 full texts across the year. We offer additional literacy lessons in Year 7 & 8 for pupils to improve their reading and writing where necessary and have been part of many national programmes such as the current 'Switch on Reading' programme. Many subjects across the school continue to have reading as a core element in their lessons.

Other features of the curriculum include: a strong enrichment programme with additional trips and visits to help deepen student's understanding of the work studied; 'Do Nows' are a strong feature across the school; individual and whole class feedback is used effectively to support students and online systems are used to support homework tasks and quizzes. Pupils are explicitly taught how to study and revise and are provided with a range of online resources to support them. Learning is checked regularly with Deliberate Independent Practice tasks being used to support the ongoing formative assessment taking place and all pupils sit internal exams during two whole school assessment weeks in December and July.

At the heart of the school's CPD programme are subject mastery sessions where departments come together each week to further and deepen their subject knowledge, improve planning and develop their pedagogical skills and assessment practice. There are also many other opportunities for teachers and support staff to develop themselves professionally with 100+ hours of professional development sessions provided throughout the year. Some of the forms of professional development include access to the school CPD library, regular action research taking place throughout the school, coaching support provided, sharing good practice with each other through a variety of teacher takeaway approaches, a half termly teaching and learning newsletter, regular hotspots, opportunities to work across partner schools in a joint practice development programme and a regular professional reading group.

The continual development and refinement of pedagogy is a focus for staff within the school. This is led at all levels with the school's Lead Practitioners, Leaders of Pedagogy and Pedagogy Ambassadors being specialists in the development of this. Yardleys 'Big 5' teaching and learning principles are a fundamental platform for our continual drive for improvement.

In recent years school leaders have understood that whilst there needs to be monitoring and accountability of teaching and academic standards this needs to be balanced with professional trust, autonomy and workload. This 'intelligent accountability' (or what the educational commentator Mary Myatt calls 'high challenge and low threat') has seen the school adopt approaches such as collaborative peer partnerships and subject reviews and a performance management system that values and rewards commitment to professional improvement and engagement with research rather than a judgment based purely on attainment data.

Educating the 'whole child'

At Yardleys, we prize the education of the 'whole child' as much as academic success. There is an emphasis on traditional values, high standards and expectations in all aspects of school life. Yardleys has outstanding pastoral care including safety, behaviour and personal development. This is confirmed through positive staff and parent feedback as well as during the OFSTED inspection in February 2020. The school operates a year group system. The heads of year receive substantial non-timetabled, protected time to carry out their duties to a very high standard. As a result, teachers frequently comment that they are able to focus on teaching in this well-ordered school environment. Yardleys enjoys an excellent local and citywide reputation in this area and regularly attracts other practitioners who seek to learn from our outstanding pastoral team.

Pupils are very hard working and enjoy coming to the school (reflected in the school's excellent attendance statistics). Behaviour is very good with pupils responding to the regular routines and consistent expectations. Pupils respond positively and demonstrate good leadership qualities when asked to become involved in school life such as organising charity events, participating in school council

discussions or becoming prefects. The many displays of students' work reflect the vibrant and creative nature of the school. The school offers a range of enrichment activities including the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, educational visits, extra-curricular and sporting opportunities. The school also has a dedicated enrichment period on Wednesday afternoons, during which pupils can experience such activities as chess, knitting, origami, dance and jewellery-making alongside a range of sporting and other outdoor pursuits.

All teaching staff can expect to be form tutors. There are two form periods every day with the first focussed on reading and the second afternoon period on pastoral issues, homework completion, study skills and personal development.

In terms of personal development the school has introduced a new, taught course, which covers both statutory aspects (sex and relationships) as well as other important issues such as physical and mental health, careers education and personal finance. Students develop strong values of mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths, beliefs and characteristics.

Academy business management

Highly effective business management has, for years, provided the bedrock to the school's high standards and successes. Consequently, the school is extremely well-organised, with well-established and highly effective systems which enable teaching staff to focus on their core business of educating children. This also impacts positively on staff workload and is a major factor in the school's extremely high rate of staff retention and successful recruitment. As a result, all staff are valued equally because pupils and colleagues can clearly see the important role that everyone plays in the school.

There is excellent financial management and compliance which means the school has consistently set balanced budgets, has a healthy surplus and an impressive track record of audit and compliance.

Partnerships

A significant strength of the school in recent years has been its work to engage with a range of external partners locally, nationally and regionally. Yardleys School is part of a collegiate of local schools which offers a range of further support and opportunities for all staff. The school has strong working ties with the local schools, post-16 providers and the wider local community. The school also works with three ITT providers – the University of Birmingham, The King Edward Consortium and Teach First.

Premises and facilities

The school is fortunate to enjoy excellent facilities on a modern, single site which was re-developed under a PFI arrangement. The building is organised into faculty areas with extensive modern facilities for, in particular, ICT, Science, Mathematics, Sports and Performing Arts. The majority of teachers teach in the same location throughout the week. Other features include an interactive whiteboard and visualiser in every room and laptops being provided for teachers. We work hard to continually maintain and update our facilities, most recently adding two new classrooms and a multi-purpose hall in January 2019. Alongside the new building the school has extensive playing fields and a roof garden.

Thank you for your interest in our school. More information on many of the points in this document are available on the VLE – www.yardleys-vle.com

We look forward very much to receiving your application.