

# RSA Academy

Bilston Road, Tipton, West Midlands DY4 0BZ

<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 July 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils who are currently in the school make good progress across subjects and year groups.
- Disadvantaged pupils are catching up well with their classmates. Many make good progress in a range of subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their particular learning needs are met well by teachers.
- Teaching is good because teachers have been trained effectively and supported by leaders.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they are keen to work hard and try their best.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are respectful, polite and well-mannered.
- The sixth form is good and students make good progress. Students are very well supported, both academically and personally.
- The principal, skilfully supported by senior leaders, has created a culture and ethos where staff have high expectations of themselves and their pupils.
- Subject leaders are trained successfully to lead their areas. They check teaching and pupils' progress effectively so that any pupils who are falling behind are quickly helped to catch up.
- The governing body is effective. Governors have a strong and detailed understanding of the school. As a result, they work closely with leaders to ensure that the school is improving.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The subject action plans drawn up to lead improvements do not always make it clear how teaching can be improved. These plans do not contain precise targets and milestones.
- Although the most able pupils make good progress over time, it is not consistent because occasionally work is not hard enough from the outset of lessons.
- Occasionally, teachers do not ask probing questions that make pupils think deeply and provide full explanations.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement, particularly for the most able pupils, by:
  - making sure that lessons challenge pupils from the outset so that time is not lost covering work which is too easy
  - ensuring that teachers' questions consistently require pupils to think deeply
  - insisting that pupils' verbal responses are sufficiently detailed.
  
- Further strengthen leadership by:
  - making sure that subject action plans identify precisely how teaching will continuously improve, including in the sixth form
  - including clear targets and milestones for these improvements throughout the year.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leadership is good at all levels, including subject leadership. As a result, teaching and achievement for all groups of pupils have improved and are now good across the school. Leaders have successfully made sure that pupils' good behaviour has been sustained since the last inspection. Leaders are demonstrating that they have good capacity to further improve the school.
- The principal has high expectations of staff and pupils. Well supported by the senior team, he has created a school culture which is highly conducive to good learning for pupils. Mutual respect, equality of opportunity and accountability underpin the school ethos. As a result, pupils are increasingly developing high expectations of themselves.
- Outcomes for many Year 11 and Year 13 pupils in 2015 were not good enough. Leaders acknowledge that the pace of improvement slowed down during the 2014–15 academic year. This was partly because the school's leadership team was in the process of a major restructure and this had a detrimental impact on teaching and pupils' progress. However, the changes created a new leadership team with a strong focus on improving teaching and pupils' progress. The impact is evident in helping pupils who are currently in the school to make good progress.
- Leaders ensure that staff benefit from a good, systematic programme of professional development and training. This involves working with other schools within the trust as well as schools in the local authority. Staff have many opportunities to improve their teaching as well as to check the accuracy of assessment information with colleagues from other schools. Lead practitioners provide personalised support to staff who need to improve their skills.
- Many staff have completed, or are working towards, nationally recognised leadership qualifications and others say that their teaching is improving because of the support they receive. As a result, the large majority of staff who responded to the questionnaire say that they feel valued and that they feel proud to be members of staff at the school.
- Leaders balance the good levels of support that staff receive with robust and regular checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Subject reviews which are conducted by senior leaders and specialists from other schools in the trust ensure that teachers and departments are appropriately held to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. These checks have resulted in good improvements this year in mathematics and English.
- The targets which are set for teachers to help them improve their work play an important part in improving teaching. Teachers are supported to reach their challenging targets, which are often linked to securing good and better progress for pupils. Staff told inspectors that they find this helpful as they are keen to further develop their expertise. This is indicative of the positive culture that the principal has created.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Subject leaders also accurately understand how their areas need to improve further because they check teaching and pupils' progress regularly. However, the lack of targets and milestones for how teaching is to improve makes it difficult for leaders to check on the success of actions.
- Leaders use the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils well. They have a wide range of effective strategies to support eligible pupils. As a result, the school is achieving good value for money and disadvantaged pupils are catching up with others across most year groups and subjects.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Leaders provide regular training for teachers. As a result, teachers plan learning which is usually well matched to the learning needs of these pupils.
- Many boys have underachieved in the past. This has improved because the school has created a leadership post which is helping to drive up standards for boys. As a result, teaching is more accurately matched to the learning needs and interests of boys than it has been in the past.
- The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' good behaviour, personal development and achievement. Younger pupils enjoy opportunities to develop key skills and competencies such as teamwork and leadership through the 'Real projects'. The topics which pupils study help them to use skills from all subjects in a wide range of exciting activities. Assemblies and the personal, social and health education curriculum help pupils to understand a wide range of safety matters.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is a strength of the curriculum. For example, the student leadership team has established a 'multi-faith museum' in the school. This

makes a good contribution to helping pupils understand British values, including educating pupils about discrimination and fostering respect for people with different faiths. In addition, pupils make a positive contribution in the community through a wide range of community-based projects.

- The sponsor provides an appropriate level of support and challenge to the school. For example, it facilitates the sharing of best practice across the 'family of schools'. It also checks the school's performance regularly in relation to the progress that pupils are making.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The highly skilled governing body has an accurate and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, it is a well-focused group which robustly holds school leaders to account for the impact of their work.
  - Governors responded well to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection and they have changed the way they work, particularly in relation to monitoring pupils' progress and challenging leaders. For example, subject leaders are required to report to the governing body and account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
  - Governors request pertinent details about any differences between the progress of different groups of pupils. This is an important reason why boys are making better progress than they have in the past. They are aware that more needs to be done to secure consistently rapid progress for pupils, particularly those who are the most able.
  - The governing body monitors the impact of the additional pupil premium funding effectively. As a result, many eligible pupils narrow the gaps between themselves and other pupils.
  - Appropriate procedures are in place for setting performance targets for the principal. Governors have ensured that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that decisions about teachers' pay are fairly linked to them meeting their performance targets, in line with the school policy.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school fully meets all requirements. Staff are appropriately vetted and trained, as required. Notices and displays ensure that safeguarding has an appropriately high profile around the school. Topics relating to safety matters which are taught in the curriculum further emphasise the importance to both pupils and staff. Leaders provide parents with appropriate information about safety matters through the regular newsletters.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is good. The improvements that were reported at the last inspection have been further developed. As a result, all groups of pupils enjoy consistently good teaching across subjects.
- The school's marking policy is consistently applied by teachers. Written feedback which pupils receive regularly provides them with additional tasks so that they can improve areas of weakness.
- Pupils are developing strong literacy skills. This is because teachers consistently mark spelling, punctuation and grammar in all subjects. In addition, teachers in different subjects make sure that pupils have opportunities to produce longer pieces of writing, when appropriate.
- Teachers assess pupils work accurately because they have benefited from sharing assessments within the school and with colleagues in other schools in the trust. They use assessment information well to plan learning which is well matched to the needs of different pupils. However, there are occasions when work is not always as well planned as it could be for the most able pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are taught well. Teachers have a good level of detailed understanding about the learning needs of these pupils. As a result, work is usually well matched to the particular skills and abilities of pupils.
- The school calls teaching assistants 'learning facilitators' and they usually work with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They make a good contribution to the strong progress these pupils make because they have been well trained. In addition, teachers make sure that learning facilitators understand what they are required to do in each lesson so that individual pupils receive the bespoke support that they need to be successful.
- Leaders have made the teaching of boys one of their priorities. Teachers regularly make sure that boys are fully involved in their learning. English teachers select works of literature which motivate boys as well as girls. Combined with the effective marking of literacy, these strategies are resulting in boys catching up with girls.
- The questions which teachers ask are usually good. Pupils are often required to think hard, but this is not

always the case. On occasions questions do not sufficiently challenge pupils, particularly the most able pupils. Sometimes teachers do not press for an answer that helps pupils to think and respond in depth.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are developing good levels of resilience in their academic work. The school actively promotes this in various ways, including the 'Real Projects' in key stage 3. As a result, pupils persevere, work hard and try their best.
- The school is successfully fostering good attitudes to learning from the vast majority of pupils. Pupils know that their education is important and many are increasingly developing high aspirations for themselves, both academically and personally.
- Pupils appreciate the good level of personal support that they receive when required. Pupils told inspectors that they are entirely confident that their tutors or heads of house are always available to offer advice. Pupils spoke positively about how this guidance usually helps them to resolve matters.
- The school works effectively with other agencies when pupils require specialist support. This ensures that pupils' personal and emotional needs are met well.
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop their self-confidence. For example, the student leadership team have a range of responsibilities in the school. Pupils spoke very positively about this and told inspectors about a wide range of community projects that they have led.
- Relationships between pupils are positive. As a result, bullying is rare and pupils are confident that when it does occur, staff deal with matters quickly and effectively. Consequently, pupils feel safe at school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of safety matters because they are taught about these. For example, pupils know how to keep safe when working online and they understand the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. Most pupils are respectful towards each other and their teachers. Pupils from different backgrounds work and socialise well together. There is no hint of discrimination in the school.
- Pupils move between lessons sensibly and with purpose. Few pupils arrive late to class.
- Pupils wear their school uniform with pride. They dress smartly and show respect for the environment. The school site is tidy and litter-free.
- The school manages incidents of poor behaviour well. The restorative approach which is taken by the school helps pupils who behave poorly to reflect on their actions. Some pupils who have exhibited poor behaviour have improved markedly. Exclusions are below average.
- Attendance has been consistently above average for the past few years. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of school.
- Leaders check the attendance and behaviour of those pupils who attend alternative provision. Most attend regularly and are developing greater maturity with respect to managing their behaviour.

## Outcomes for pupils are good

- Outcomes are good because pupils who are currently at the school are making good progress, including those in the sixth form.
- Results of national tests in 2015 showed that, although there were some improvements compared to the previous year, many Year 11 pupils did not achieve as well as they should have. Far too many boys underachieved in 2015 and the most able pupils made slow progress. However, this underachievement is not replicated for current pupils because of some significant staff changes and the restructured leadership team. In addition, teaching is now good.
- Boys are now making similar progress to girls this year because teaching has focused specifically on improving progress for boys without any loss of attention to girls.
- The most able pupils are making good progress this year because teachers have improved the use of assessment to match work to the particular learning needs of these pupils. However, this good practice is

not always consistent and occasionally work lacks challenge. As a result, progress for this group of pupils could be more rapid to ensure that they reach high levels of attainment.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly good progress to other pupils. This is because their learning needs are accurately met by teachers and learning facilitators.
- The progress that pupils make in Years 7 and 8 is good. The school's own assessment information and work in pupils' books indicates that most groups of pupils are making good progress.
- Leaders say they are confident that outcomes for Year 11 this year will be much better than last year. Robust assessments which have been made for Year 11 indicate that pupils this year are making better progress than last year across a range of subjects, including the proportion of pupils attaining the highest grades. Leaders' predictions, therefore, have a degree of reliability. The fact that teaching is now securely good, combined with robust procedures for checking teachers' assessments, adds to this reliability.
- The school uses the additional Year 7 catch-up premium well (this is additional funding given to schools to support those who join with attainment in English and mathematics below what is expected). The school has created smaller classes with this funding so that pupils benefit from higher levels of support and attention than they would in larger groups. As a result, many lower-attaining pupils are catching up in both subjects, including in reading.
- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 made better progress than in previous years. However, the gap between the proportion of disadvantaged pupils and others nationally attaining five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has been widening for three years. Disadvantaged pupils of all abilities are catching up because teaching is now consistently good. In addition, the school uses the additional funding effectively. For example, pupils receive additional support in English and mathematics.
- Those pupils who attend alternative provision are making good progress. Leaders check this at appropriate points throughout the year.
- The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Leadership of the sixth form is good. The improvements in leadership in the main school have been mirrored in the sixth form. Leaders have made sure that students are now making better progress than they have in recent years. This is because teaching in the sixth form has improved, as it has in the main school.
- Leaders have made sure that students receive good-quality careers advice and guidance before joining the sixth form. This ensures that students are following appropriate courses that are well matched to their skills, interests and career aspirations. As a result, retention of students is above average this year.
- Students also benefit from good careers advice during their sixth-form studies. Based on the most recent national data, an above-average proportion of Year 13 students are planning to move on to education, employment or training. Increasingly, students are securing places at some of the most prestigious universities.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and they have a detailed understanding of examination requirements. As a result, teachers skilfully plan activities which help students to improve their grades incrementally. Teachers have high expectations of students and set challenging tasks which require students to think deeply and apply analytical and evaluative skills.
- Students benefit from much smaller class sizes than in the main school. Teachers capitalise on this by providing highly personalised, bespoke support to students. Students' work in their folders confirm that these high expectations have been consistent across the year.
- Outcomes are good because students currently in the sixth form are making good progress. The school's own assessment information for Year 13 students who have completed the International Baccalaureate Diploma indicates that students have made strong progress this year. This was confirmed on the first day of the inspection, when the school received the actual results for Year 13 students who studied this course. These results indicate that students have made good progress, which is a significant improvement on last year.
- Students did not made good enough progress in vocational courses over the past two years, including those who were previously entitled to free school meals. However, as a result of the strong improvements made to teaching as well as good leadership, students are now making good progress in vocational courses, including those students previously entitled to free school meals. This progress is confirmed by

external examination board checks and units of work which have already been assessed. Progress is particularly strong in sports studies and health and social care.

- Those students who are required to resit GCSE English and mathematics make good progress. Although some students in Year 12 have not yet reached a grade C, half improved the grades that they achieved in Year 11 in the November 2015 examination. In Year 13, two thirds of students have achieved a grade C or better in English and seven out of nine students have achieved this standard in mathematics.
- The school's work to promote sixth-form students' personal development and welfare is good. Students are well supported by their tutors and feel well cared for. Behaviour is also good and students attend regularly. Students told inspectors that there are 'harmonious relationships in the sixth form'.
- The curriculum is well planned. All students who study vocational courses take part in work experience which is related to their areas of study. Many students who are not following vocational courses also choose to engage in work experience. Students are involved in a wide range of voluntary work and community service. These activities make a strong contribution to developing students' employability skills as well as their wider personal development.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135599
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002535

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1023
<b>Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	134
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Philippa Cordingley
<b>Principal</b>	Daulton Redmond
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 556 1351
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<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@rsaacademy.org">info@rsaacademy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16–17 January 2014

## Information about this school

- The school is a similar size to most secondary schools.
- One in 10 pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, which is average.
- A total of 4% of the pupils speak English as an additional language, which is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average.
- The pupil premium, which is additional government funding given to schools for children who are looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals, provides support for four in 10 pupils. This is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision on a full- and part-time basis. These pupils attend Sandwell Caring Trust, The Orchard Centre, The Albion Foundation, Shepwell School, White Heath Pupil Referral Unit, Nova, ACE Academy and OSCA.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is sponsored by the RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce).



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 33 lessons, 27 of which were jointly observed with senior and middle leaders and lead practitioners. The inspection team made several short visits to other lessons to check on the progress and behaviour of different groups of pupils. Inspectors also looked at a large sample of work in pupils' books. This was done with senior and middle leaders and lead practitioners.
- Meetings were held with four groups of pupils from all year groups that were in school. Other meetings were held with members of the governing body and with senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects. The lead inspector met with a representative from the sponsor and held a telephone discussion with a consultant who works with the school.
- Inspectors analysed the 60 responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View. They also analysed 70 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the school's development plan and department action plans. In addition, inspectors analysed a wide range of information on pupils' performance.
- At the time of the inspection, Year 11 and Year 13 students were not in school because they had completed their courses. Year 10 students were also out of school taking part in work experience.

## Inspection team

Richard Sutton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Feldman	Ofsted Inspector
Robert Bourdon-Pierre	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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