

Inspection of Reach School

High Street, Kings Heath, Birmingham, West Midlands B14 7BB

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

The headteacher of this school is John Gibson. This school is a single academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Malcolm Weaver.

What is it like to attend this school?

Reach School is a respectful and caring community. Pupils' best interests are at the heart of everything that happens. Pupils join the school having previously experienced difficulties in their education, so when pupils start, staff make sure that they get to know them quickly. They find out what pupils do well and the help that they need. As a result, pupils settle in fast and learn to meet the high expectations of the school. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is well managed. Pupils try hard in lessons and they do well.

The school is ambitious for pupils and they are prepared well for their next steps. Pupils value the active citizenship programme that allows them to experience a wide range of community activities, including group walks in the area, meals in restaurants, day trips and activities, such as skating and skiing. 'Pathways' lessons teach pupils how to be independent. They learn how to budget and cook as well as about employability skills. Pupils benefit from a very well-considered careers programme. The school provides a 'three-year guarantee' to pupils, providing them with careers support and information for three years after they leave. As a result of this work, pupils secure and maintain positive destinations after they leave the school.

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

Pupils experience no limits on what they can study. The school has put in place an ambitious curriculum. Pupils can study a full range of GCSE and vocational qualifications, some in partnership with other providers. In some subjects, there has been careful thought about the essential knowledge that pupils need to be successful. This means that pupils who join the school later in the academic year, or those who may be absent at times, are able to catch up quickly and do well. In other subjects, the school has not identified so precisely what pupils need to know and this limits the progress pupils can make in these subjects.

The school has made sure that arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have been improved since the last inspection. Pupils' needs are identified more quickly and the school works more effectively with other professionals. Staff receive, and use, good-quality information about pupils' needs and adaptations to pupils' learning are effective. The school knows there is more to do to make sure that the provision for pupils with SEND matches their ambitions and they have suitable plans in place to achieve this.

Since the previous inspection, the school has continued to focus on developing pupils' reading skills. However, the school has not made sure that it has identified the specific gaps in pupils' reading knowledge and so the support pupils receive is not focused well enough to address these weaknesses. As a result, pupils do not improve their reading as quickly as they could.

The school's behaviour policy reflects the 'REACH values'. All pupils, and their families, are clear about the school's expectations and the consequences for good or poor behaviour. Staff know their pupils well and put in place appropriate support for their behaviour. As a result, the school is calm and behaviour is well managed. Pupils often join the school with low attendance, and the school works hard to make sure that pupils attend more often. The school has useful systems to analyse behaviour and attendance. However, these are not detailed enough to enable leaders to spot trends or issues quickly enough. Sometimes, therefore, the school is slow to take actions that could improve pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Pupils are at the heart of this school. Leaders take care to make sure that pupils' needs are addressed and that they are prepared well for the future. In personal, health and social education (PSHE), pupils learn about the risks they may face in the community and how to keep safe. Safeguarding leaders work tirelessly to provide the help that pupils may need. Pupils know that staff listen to their concerns and, as a result, share their worries with them. This helps to create a positive environment in which pupils try new things and make positive life choices.

Reach School is a fully established part of its community. It is developing strong links with parents and works well with partner schools. Governors are extremely experienced and knowledgeable about the school. They know exactly what works well and what still needs to improve and work closely with the school to make sure that these improvements are made. Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel well supported and valued.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school has not carefully identified the precise knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember. This means that pupils, especially those who join the school late, or who are absent, do not gain the essential knowledge they need to succeed, which hinders their progress. The school should make sure that they have clearly identified the subject and disciplinary knowledge that pupils need to be successful in all subjects and use this to make sure that all pupils, especially those who are absent or who join the school late, are able to succeed.
- The school has not made sure that they identify the gaps in pupils' reading carefully enough. This means that reading interventions are not always as focused as they could be and pupils who may struggle with their reading do not learn to read fluently as quickly as they could. The school should make sure that

they precisely identify the gaps in individual pupils' reading knowledge and skills and put in place highly focused interventions to make sure that all pupils are able to read well.

- The school does not analyse the data they produce about some areas of their work closely enough. This means that in areas such as behaviour and attendance, the school is unable to identify emerging issues and take the right actions quickly enough. Leaders should review how they evaluate areas of their work, particularly for behaviour and attendance, to make sure that they have the right information to act on concerns or emerging trends quickly and effectively.

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	139671
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10290602
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	13 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	52
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Malcolm Weaver
Headteacher	John Gibson
Website	www.reachschoo.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 October 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in January 2023.
- The school uses one unregistered provider.
- 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.
- The school currently has 52 dual registered pupils who attend the school full time.

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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors also met with other staff in the school. Inspectors met with some trustees, including the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, art and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited other lessons across the curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences in school and met with pupils who had recently left the school.
- Inspectors met with headteachers who commission places in the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views 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 reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's Parent View, responses to the staff survey and responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Claire Price, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Richard Wakefield

His Majesty's Inspector

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