

REAL Alternative Provision School

6 Woodhouse Road, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 2AD

Inspection dates

1–3 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher demonstrates excellent leadership which inspires senior leaders to have a positive impact on provision and outcomes for all pupils.
- The school provides an outstanding, flexible curriculum which combines essential academic learning and vocational experiences for all pupils.
- The quality of teaching and learning across the full curriculum is consistently good. Robust arrangements for the marking and assessment of pupils' work contribute strongly to their understanding of how to improve.
- In the short time since the school opened, pupils have made good progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, from mostly low starting points.
- The small number of pupils who completed Year 11 in summer 2016 all moved on to appropriate further education courses or employment.
- Post-16 students make good progress with nationally recognised qualifications in academic and vocational areas of learning. These build effectively on their key stage 4 achievements.
- The school provides a safe environment. Leaders have established rigorous procedures and oversight for all aspects of safeguarding, personal development and the well-being of pupils and learners.
- Leaders and governors have a strong and accurate understanding of how well pupils are achieving. They have secured continuous improvements to the quality of teaching and, consequently, to pupils' achievement.
- Leaders and governors are highly ambitious for the school. In a short space of time, leaders have secured high-quality provision and a positive response from pupils. Their achievements so far indicate their strong capacity to strengthen the school further.
- Most pupils demonstrate strong improvements in their attendance and behaviour. The attendance and commitment of a minority of pupils and post-16 students are not yet good enough.
- The proprietors and senior leaders have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue the drive towards the outstanding provision and ambitious outcomes identified in the school's plans, by:
 - improving the consistency of attendance by pupils and post-16 students
 - ensuring that the progress of pupils and post-16 students is sustained and accelerated over time
 - further developing the commitment of pupils and post-16 students to improving their work consistently to a high standard.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietors and senior leaders have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- The headteacher has high expectations of staff and of what pupils can achieve. He has created a highly effective senior leadership team, each member of which has an excellent knowledge and understanding of the pupils for whom they are responsible. Their work has an extensive, positive impact on outcomes for pupils.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are mutually respectful. Pupils enjoy attending school and benefit considerably from the wide range of learning opportunities provided.
- All members of staff who completed an inspection questionnaire state that the school is well led and managed and that they are proud to be members of staff at the school.
- Senior leaders are ambitious for all pupils to succeed. They secure improvements effectively to the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment. The school has established a successful learning community in a short time since it opened.
- Senior leaders check and evaluate all aspects of the school's work effectively, including the off-site provision. They understand the successes and challenges experienced by individual pupils and respond flexibly to resolve any concerns about timetables and courses.
- The school provides good opportunities for the training of staff, ensuring that all mandatory requirements are met and that staff extend their individual qualifications and skills. A local training school contributes very effectively to the development of staff confidence in teaching and assessment.
- The excellent curriculum, together with good teaching and assessment, enable pupils to achieve a range of academic and vocational qualifications appropriate to their various abilities. Their flexible timetables reward their efforts at standards between entry-level certificates and A level or level 3 vocational qualifications.
- Current pupils, together with the small number of leavers in summer 2016, have made good progress from their mostly low starting points. It is too soon to judge the extent of progress over time, for example, across a full key stage.
- The school's arrangements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are extensive and effective. Themes studied, particularly in personal, social, health and citizenship education, contribute well to pupils' well-being, emotional and mental health and personal safety.
- The school works effectively with pupils to help them recognise their responsibility to prepare for adult life in modern Britain. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils, regardless of pupils' starting points or previous experiences. This is evident in pupils' individualised timetables and the personal support provided to enable all to achieve success.

- Senior leaders are aware that the attendance of a minority of pupils requires improvement. They use their sharp understanding of the characteristics of reluctant learners to challenge them successfully to take increasing responsibility for their own motivation and commitment.

Governance

- Governance is good. Governors have extensive experience and understanding of education and they ensure robust scrutiny and analysis of the reports provided by the headteacher.
- The chair of the governing body, in particular, has had an important influence on the positive ethos established in the school. He combines rigour and sensitivity in his contribution to arrangements for the evaluation of all aspects of the school's work.
- Governors hold senior leaders to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They are aware of those areas that require further development and supportive of the headteacher in his drive to achieve excellence.
- Governors oversee arrangements for the appraisal of the headteacher and staff. They celebrate successes and ensure that staff are ambitious in the range of opportunities provided for all pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school has published on its website an up-to-date policy for safeguarding which has regard to the latest statutory guidance.
- Senior leaders implement rigorous arrangements for the safe recruitment of staff. They record details of all required checks on staff suitability in a single central register.
- All staff receive suitable induction which includes training in the school's procedures for identifying, resolving and recording any child protection concerns. Staff are trained to address and report concerns, for example, about child sexual exploitation or radicalisation.
- Senior leaders work effectively with external agencies to provide family support and engage specialist services, to provide support for pupils experiencing mental health difficulties, for example. All staff are very aware of the social and emotional challenges faced by individual pupils; they work tirelessly to overcome these.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Effective planning supports the good quality of teaching. Senior leaders provide good oversight and support for staff in preparing learning activities well matched to the learning needs of pupils.
- The great majority of pupils have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. The requirements of the plans and statements are prominent in the provision made for individual pupils and integrated appropriately into their individual education plans.

- Teaching staff have a strong personal knowledge of the learning characteristics of individual pupils. They respond flexibly and appropriately to pupils' changing needs, including by making suitable adjustments to the curriculum.
- The majority of pupils have had negative previous experiences of school and many have had significant periods of time out of school. They take time to adjust positively to the faith in them displayed by staff. However, pupils do improve their focus and address their personal barriers to learning.
- Teaching staff plan suitable tasks that provide a good level of challenge to extend pupils' learning. Staff assess pupils' starting points robustly and identify gaps in pupils' learning, taking account of national expectations.
- Staff are skilled at questioning pupils continuously about their learning, deepening pupils' understanding and challenging their misconceptions. Pupils in a key stage 4 class, who were starting from insecure previous knowledge, learned how to calculate and compare fractions effectively, because of high-quality questioning and increasing levels of challenge. They demonstrated good concentration and had the confidence to discuss their answers.
- Teachers are skilled in the use of timely interventions to re-direct and re-focus learners. They monitor pupils' work continuously and re-shape learning to overcome difficulties. Pupils at key stage 4 made good progress in identifying and applying language devices such as alliteration, simile and metaphor, with the help of well-chosen examples provided by the teacher.
- The school has implemented a common approach to marking and senior staff monitor its impact on pupils' learning. The work in pupils' books demonstrates good improvements in writing, comprehension, numeracy and knowledge across a range of subjects.
- Staff assess pupils' work at regular intervals across the full range of subjects studied, including vocational courses at off-site locations. All staff have access to pupils' assessment records and these are monitored continuously by senior leaders. Regular assessments enable staff to set appropriate learning targets for individual pupils.
- Very few pupils enter the school with above-average starting points. However, staff are very alert to the needs of able pupils. They ensure that pupils succeed in their GCSE courses, and prepare them well to continue to higher-level courses in the school's post-16 provision.
- Teachers provide pupils with a good balance between one-to-one learning and opportunities to develop the social skills required to work effectively in teams.
- Provision at off-site vocational courses makes a very strong contribution to the motivation and commitment of many pupils. In creative media, for example, pupils experience an office-type environment and contribute to work on commercial projects. They value the opportunity to work with modern equipment, such as drones and three-dimensional printers.
- Pupils learn practical skills, for example, in music production or motor mechanics, which help them understand the demands of the adult workplace as they begin to consider their own career prospects.
- All staff work within a strong framework of national qualifications, which provide excellent opportunities for pupils to understand the standards required for future employment.

- Teachers develop literacy and numeracy skills through discrete lessons and ensure that they feature very strongly in the variety of wider curriculum experiences provided. Information and communication technologies contribute effectively to the development of pupils' skills and their preparation for life in modern Britain.
- All staff working with pupils demonstrate patience and persistence in encouraging pupils to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. The majority of pupils make good progress with improvements in their engagement and cooperation. However, not all pupils strive to improve their work to the highest standards of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils develop good self-esteem because of the confidence in them shown by the staff.
- Pupils are proud of the school and of their achievements. They are positive about the opportunities provided for them and of their successes.
- As they adjust to the caring ethos of the school, pupils develop respect for others, including staff and fellow pupils.
- Pupils make good use of the careers information and advice provided and they benefit from the range of opportunities for them to prepare effectively for employment.
- Attitudes to learning show marked improvements for the majority of pupils.
- Staff place a strong emphasis on pupils' well-being, including their emotional development and mental health. These aspects of pupils' personal development are a high priority in the curriculum and in relationships within the school.
- Pupils are safe in school. They have good opportunities in the curriculum to study behaviours which present risks to their welfare, including a good understanding of e-safety.
- The curriculum also provides good opportunities for pupils to develop awareness of healthy lifestyles, including physical fitness, healthy diets and the risks associated with substance misuse.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They cooperate well with staff and mostly stay focused during lessons. For the majority of pupils this represents good progress in comparison with their previous disaffection with school.
- The school is an orderly community. Behaviour around the school and in vocational settings is good. Pupils develop appropriate relationships with others and treat the premises and facilities with respect.
- The majority of pupils achieve strong improvements in their attendance, often from previously low levels. A small number of pupils are persistently absent and this has a negative impact on their learning.

- Parents and carers are very positive about improvements in the attendance and engagement of their children. They recognise the positive impact that the school has on their children's personal development.
- Representatives of local authorities express positive views about the impact that the school has on the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils they place at the school.
- There have been no serious incidents, bullying or exclusions recorded since the school opened. Staff manage any misbehaviour appropriately in a manner that prevents escalation or negative impact on other pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school has not been open long enough to educate pupils through a full key stage or to demonstrate progress over time. However, current pupils, and those who left from Year 11 in 2016, demonstrate good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils, most of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress across a range of subjects, including a variety of practical and vocational courses. They make good progress from mostly low starting points in reading, writing, speaking, listening and mathematics.
- Pupils who completed Year 11 in 2016 made good progress, with the exception of a small number whose attendance had a negative impact on their achievement. All the regular attenders made progress from their starting points and achieved qualifications in a variety of subjects, including a small number of higher-grade GCSE awards.
- The great majority of leavers secured qualifications in both English and mathematics, together with additional qualifications, including BTEC sport or construction, GCSE science and information and communication technology (ICT).
- The small number of the most able pupils achieved exceptional GCSE grades in mathematics and science, preparing a secure foundation for further study at A level.
- Current pupils have mostly made at least good progress towards predicted achievement in external examinations in English and mathematics from their low starting points. Assessment records demonstrate that the majority are on track to achieve additional awards in vocational subjects and preparation for working life.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making progress which is close to that of other pupils nationally with similar starting points. In a short time since joining the school, these pupils have begun to close the gaps between their learning and that of others and to prepare sound foundations for good achievement.
- The majority of pupils have secure reading skills and demonstrate good comprehension of the texts that they read across a range of subjects. Work in pupils' books shows good development of legible and well-presented handwriting.
- The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education or employment. All those who completed Year 11 in 2016 either returned to post-16 studies at the school or moved into further education or employment.

Sixth form provision

Good

- The school agrees individual timetables with placing local authorities for post-16 students. All students continue with a combination of English, mathematics and vocational subjects. They take part in vocational and work-related learning alongside key stage 4 pupils and have access to a similar range of external qualifications.
- The school tailors its post-16 provision flexibly to provide opportunities for students who require additional time to extend their key stage 4 learning and qualifications in a familiar and supportive environment. Staff make individual arrangements with sensitivity and understanding of each student's continuing educational needs.
- A small number of post-16 students extend their learning to achieve level 3 qualifications, for example in creative media or BTEC sport. The most able students who have succeeded at GCSE continue into A-level studies, for example in mathematics and sciences.
- Students also study suitable courses to assist them with the transition from school to employment, including elements of careers advice and guidance, preparation for working life and independent living. Their timetables also provide access to suitable work experience placements tailored to individual needs and circumstances.
- Post-16 students value the additional time and personal support they receive. They appreciate the advice they receive about future options for study and employment. The school works effectively with the local independent careers service to ensure that students understand their future options.
- Retention rates to date are good. Students enjoy the opportunities provided for them; they behave appropriately and mostly respond positively and take their work seriously.
- The quality of teaching and assessment is good and contributes to effective learning, the vocational courses, in particular. Staff give good attention to the assessment of risk and ensuring that working environments are safe.
- This is the school's first year of post-16 provision and, to date, no students have moved on to further education or employment.
- The proprietors and leaders have ensured that the school meets all the independent school requirements related to post-16 provision.

School details

Unique reference number	142538
DfE registration number	891/6037
Inspection number	10020879

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Independent special school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	28
Number of part-time pupils	28
Proprietor	Real Foundation Trust
Chair	Philip Gawthorpe
Headteacher	Martin Davies
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,300 full-time; £21,500 part-time post-16
Telephone number	01623 423411
Website	www.realaps.org
Email address	nicky.holland@real-education.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- REAL Alternative Provision School opened in January 2016.
- The central hub of the school is located in Mansfield. It also provides practical and vocational courses at a number of additional sites:

- R.E.A.L. Sport, Ilkeston
 - R.E.A.L. Sport, Glapwell
 - R.E.A.L. Mechanics, Mansfield
 - R.E.A.L. Mechanics, Sneinton
 - R.E.A.L. Construction, Chesterfield
 - R.E.A.L. Music and Graphic Design, Mansfield
 - R.E.A.L. Adventure, Mansfield
 - R.E.A.L. Horticulture, Sutton-in-Ashfield
 - R.E.A.L. Hair and Beauty, Ilkeston.
- The school currently uses the services of one alternative provider to contribute to the education of selected pupils: CAST Angling project, Newstead, Nottinghamshire.
 - Pupils are placed at the school by a number of local authorities in the East Midlands, or occasionally by local maintained schools or academies.
 - The school is registered to provide education for up to 50 pupils and post-16 students aged between 14 and 19 years.
 - Pupils and students have a variety of additional learning needs, including social, emotional or mental health difficulties, or autism spectrum disorder. Most pupils enter the school with poor previous attendance or significant periods out of school.
 - Approximately 90% of pupils have an education, health and care plan, or a statement of special educational needs. Nineteen per cent are looked after in the care of their local authorities. An above-average proportion is known to be eligible for free school meals.
 - The school's mission is to 'create an innovative, dynamic opportunity for the educational empowerment of young people and families. This will enable the most educationally disadvantaged to progress into independence and into employment, further education or college'.

Information about this inspection

- This was the school's first inspection since it opened in January 2016.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning at four sites operated by the school. He met with a number of pupils individually and scrutinised examples of their work in a variety of subjects.
- The inspector held meetings with the proprietor and the chair of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders and teachers. In addition, he considered responses to inspection questionnaires submitted by 19 members of staff.
- The inspector conducted telephone conversations with six parents and carers of pupils and students. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire for these to be taken into consideration.
- The inspector also conducted telephone conversations with the representatives of two local authorities and one academy that place pupils and students at the school, and one senior health professional who works with the families of pupils and students admitted to the school.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of school policies, procedures and records in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

David Young, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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