

# Inspection of Peak Academy

Drake Lane, Dursley GL11 5HD

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Inspection dates:	7 and 8 May 2025
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Elisa Entwistle. This school is part of the Reach South Academy Trust which means other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Dean Ashton OBE and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Marcus Agius CBE.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The Peak Academy aspires for pupils to increase their self-worth and learn how to 'thrive in society'. It is a place where pupils re-engage with their education and contribute to their community. This reflects the school's values, which include trust, respect, care and independence.

The school is ambitious for its pupils and staff want them to do well. However, the quality of education is not currently good. Some pupils do not remember the knowledge they have been taught, which slows the progress they make through the curriculum. Too many pupils do not attend school well enough and therefore are missing out on their education.

The school has high expectations for how pupils will behave and what they will achieve and typically pupils achieve well from often low starting points. Pupils know what is expected of them during lessons and social times. Any conflicts are calmed quickly. Pupils learn how to respect themselves, each other and adults.

The school offers strong pastoral support to pupils. Pupils enjoy warm relationships with adults and soon develop a sense of belonging. Pupils get the care and support they need to overcome challenges. They are confident that they can share any worries or concerns. Pupils trust that the school will listen and act promptly. This helps them to feel safe.

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

The school is aspirational for the pupils. The vision is shared by the whole school community. The school is unwavering in its determination to provide the very best learning and social events to enable every pupil to experience success. High-quality training for staff is pivotal to the rapid improvements that have been made in the school. Staff value the training, coaching and mentoring they receive. As a result, they are confident and effective teachers with secure subject knowledge and strong pedagogy.

Changes to the curriculum are ongoing to better meet the individual needs of pupils. However, the school recognises that in some subjects the curriculum is not designed well enough to enable pupils to remember the most important knowledge over time. In these subjects, pupils find it more difficult to build on their prior learning. The school is addressing this, and changes are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, it will take more time to fully embed and ensure pupils receive a good quality of education.

Pupils arrive with significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Many pupils have complex social and emotional needs. The school wants them to become confident learners and responsible citizens. On arrival, the school checks what pupils know and can do to ensure that provision is in place to meet each pupil's learning, social and emotional needs. The school focuses on the core subjects of reading, writing, mathematics and science. This helps prepare pupils for their next steps in college or work. Pupils work towards a range of qualifications, including GCSEs in English, mathematics and art, and achieve success.

Many pupils are fluent readers. Those in the early stages of reading get the support they need to catch up quickly. Pupils read books which match their phonic knowledge and are age appropriate. Pupils are able to write, however, they are reluctant writers. This means that pupils do not consistently demonstrate the knowledge they have gained through their written work, which leaders recognise is an important life skill pupils need.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development. It provides pupils with rich developmental experiences, such as theatre trips, working on the community allotments and in a music studio. These experiences help develop pupils' interests and talents. Pupils speak positively regarding the wealth of enrichment opportunities such as go karting, archery and cheerleading. Such opportunities support the development of pupils' perseverance, resilience, leadership and teamwork skills.

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is designed carefully. Pupils are taught the knowledge they need to lead healthy and successful lives. They talk with confidence about the importance of staying safe when online and how to manage their emotions.

The school does not put a ceiling on pupils' aspirations. The school provides helpful careers guidance to prepare pupils for their next steps. Most pupils go on to college, apprenticeships or into the world of work successfully.

Staff are proud to work at the school and comment how it is a place where there is significant 'camaraderie'. They welcome the support and consideration of leaders to manage their workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. As a result, these pupils do not build their knowledge well over time and have gaps in their learning. The trust needs to continue to modify and implement the attendance strategy and work with families to ensure that pupils attend regularly to enable them to learn more successfully over time.
- In some subjects the curriculum is not designed well enough to enable pupils to remember the most important knowledge over time. In these subjects, pupils find it more difficult to build on their prior learning. The trust should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is designed to ensure the most important knowledge is remembered over time by pupils to support their subsequent learning.
- The curriculum for writing is less well developed than in other subjects. Some pupils have not secured the fundamentals of writing that they need to be ready for later

work. The trust should ensure that the writing curriculum is securely in place so that pupils achieve the best possible outcomes in writing, including their handwriting.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	149396
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10379000
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	66
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Marcus Agius CBE
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Dean Ashton OBE
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elisa Entwistle
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thepeakacademy.org">www.thepeakacademy.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This is a special school for pupils with social, emotion and mental health needs (SEMH). All pupils have an education, health and care plan related to their SEMH.
- The school makes use of three unregistered alternative providers.
- 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.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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, assistant headteachers and wider staff.
- The lead inspector met with the deputy CEO.
- The lead inspector met with an independent safeguarding consultant.
- The lead inspector met with a trustee and members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects English, mathematics, art and design technology. For each deep dive, the 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.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from across the school read.
- Inspectors sampled pupils' work in science, history, geography, Religious Education and mechanics.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered key documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan and governors' minutes.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. An inspector met with school leaders to discuss and review how they respond to behaviour incidents and pupils' attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey and the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments.

## **Inspection team**

Jen Southall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Smith

Ofsted Inspector

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