

Ernesford Grange Community Academy

Princethorpe Way, Coventry, West Midlands CV3 2QD

Inspection dates

6–7 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and middle-ability pupils, underachieve considerably across a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- Leaders have been too slow to address low standards of teaching, progress, attainment, behaviour and attendance.
- Governors have not ensured that additional funding is sufficiently well used to improve the achievement and attendance of disadvantaged pupils or boost Year 7 pupils' basic skills.
- Leaders' work to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy across subjects does not yet have a positive enough impact on pupils' basic skills.
- Governors and the multi-academy trust board have failed to hold leaders to account for the school's poor performance.
- The curriculum has a negative impact on some pupils' progress. Pupils take examinations before they are ready and achieve poorly as a result.
- Teaching over time has been ineffective. Teachers do not make good use of information about pupils when planning lessons. Consequently, many pupils underachieve.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment have been inaccurate and overgenerous. Because of this, leaders and governors have failed to target support to where it is needed.
- Attendance is low and not improving. It is particularly low for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Too many lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour. There is a lack of consistency in how behaviour is managed by leaders.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher and senior leadership team have accurately identified the school's weaknesses. They have put plans in place to tackle low standards. It is too early to evaluate the impact of these plans.
- The most able pupils make progress in line with their peers nationally.
- Leaders' work to safeguard pupils is effective.
- The school's sixth form is good. Effective leadership and strong teaching lead to good progress.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and governance by ensuring that:
 - governors have the skills and understanding to hold school leaders to account for the school's performance
 - the curriculum at key stage 4 promotes all pupils' progress
 - teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment are reliable
 - pupil premium funding has a positive impact on the attendance, progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils
 - literacy and numeracy catch-up funding has a positive impact on those pupils in Year 7 who need to improve their basic skills
 - leaders evaluate training for teachers in terms of its impact on pupils' progress
 - provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures good progress
 - pastoral middle leaders become more effective at improving attendance.
- Improve attendance across Years 7 to 11 by:
 - carefully evaluating the impact of the school's strategies for the improvement of attendance to determine which strategies are effective and which are not
 - challenging and supporting parents of pupils with high levels of absence to ensure that their child's attendance improves.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and middle-ability pupils make good progress by ensuring that teachers:
 - use assessment and other information to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' needs
 - plan lessons across all subjects that develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills
 - deploy teaching assistants so that their impact is consistently positive on pupils' progress
 - consistently tackle poor behaviour so that learning is not disrupted.

External reviews of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how these aspects of leadership and management might be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 4 were low in 2015 and in 2016. Over time, leaders have not taken the rapid action needed to improve these outcomes. Current leaders have taken many steps this year to improve progress and attainment but it is not yet possible to see any impact.
- Leaders did not foresee the continued low outcomes in 2016 because teachers' forecasts of pupils' attainment were inaccurate and overgenerous. Steps that leaders have taken this year to improve the accuracy of teachers' assessments have yet to prove effective.
- Pupils' attendance is low. Leaders do not make good use of data about pupils' attendance, especially that of groups, to spot trends and issues. Leaders' recent actions aimed at improving the attendance of pupils have been ineffective.
- The pupil premium grant has not been targeted effectively. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils make much slower progress than other pupils nationally across many subjects, including English and mathematics. These differences are not diminishing for current cohorts.
- The design of the curriculum has a negative impact on pupils' progress. For example, some pupils take examinations in Year 10 having had insufficient time to develop a deep understanding of their work. This leads to poor outcomes. Similarly, some pupils lose teaching time from English and mathematics so that they can complete separate science qualifications. Consequently, these pupils fall behind in English and mathematics. Changes to the school's curriculum last year were ineffective in improving pupils' outcomes and it is too early to see the impact of the changes introduced this year.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers' training is well matched to their development needs. Therefore, training has not consistently improved teaching and pupils' achievement. Improvements in training, for example training about special educational needs, have yet to have a reliably positive impact on pupils' learning because they are very recent.
- Middle and senior leaders do not consistently deal well with incidents of poor behaviour. Consequently, staff do not always feel well supported when poor behaviour happens.
- Although leaders correctly identify low literacy and numeracy levels for some pupils as barriers to their learning, not enough work is done to improve pupils' basic skills. Recent initiatives to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy have yet to show impact. The Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium has not been used effectively to address some pupils' weak basic skills on entry to the school.
- Leaders have recently established new arrangements for appraisal which focus well on teaching and improving pupils' performance, but it is too early to see any impact of these changes.

- Leaders have completed a full overhaul of systems to track pupils' attainment. Moderation across a range of subjects and year groups is also planned to ensure that leaders have a secure knowledge of the progress of pupils in the school. It is not yet possible to see the impact of these changes.
- The school has seen a high turnover of staff in recent months. Recently, effective support from the Sidney Stringer Multi-Academy Trust has ensured that the school is fully staffed with subject-specialist teachers and senior leaders.
- The leadership of the sixth form is good. Leaders identified weaknesses in outcomes in 2015 and effectively addressed them. The school's analysis of outcomes in 2016 shows that students make good progress from their starting points across most subjects. In 2016, all students who left the sixth form went on to higher education, apprenticeships or employment.
- Inspectors recommend that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance

- Governors and the multi-academy trust (MAT) board have not effectively held leaders to account for low standards in the school. This is because they have not had accurate information about the progress of groups of pupils, their behaviour and attendance. Consequently, they rely too heavily on what school leaders tell them. Governors and the MAT board have failed to ensure that additional funding, including the pupil premium and special educational needs funding, has been used effectively.
- The MAT replaced the local governing body with an interim executive board (IEB) at the end of September 2016. This board is fully committed to rapid improvements in outcomes for pupils but it is too early to see any impact of its work.
- Membership of the IEB includes the chair and vice-chair of the MAT so that the MAT is now fully informed about, and directly involved in, the governance of the school.
- Governors now demonstrate higher levels of scrutiny and call senior and middle leaders to monthly meetings to account for the impact of action plans. It is too early to see any impact of these changes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are stored securely, detailed and of high quality. Staff have regular training in safeguarding.
- The vast majority of pupils say that they know whom to talk to if they have a problem and that their teachers listen to them. The majority of pupils who filled in the online questionnaire, and all the pupils whom inspectors spoke to during the inspection, said that they feel safe in school. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View said that their children feel safe at school, although a minority had concerns.
- The leaders responsible for safeguarding are appropriately skilled. They keep up to date through annual training and attending regular local authority updates and meetings with the local police panel. Leaders have also undertaken a range of specific training to help them reduce the risks that are particular to pupils in the school and the local area.

- Leaders have developed a curriculum that helps pupils understand how to keep themselves safe from a variety of risks. For example, pupils benefit from sessions with experts on drug and alcohol abuse, and the local police give assemblies on issues such as child sexual exploitation.
- Pupils benefit from access to a range of services when they need them because leaders work effectively with a range of external agencies. The leaders responsible for safeguarding are tenacious in their approach to securing external support for pupils who need it.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate, and this means that pupils do not make the progress they should. Consequently, they underachieve across most subjects including English and mathematics. The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and middle-ability pupils are especially low.
- The school is rich in information about pupils' abilities and learning needs. However, teachers do not use this information to plan lessons and activities at the right level that enable pupils to succeed. Some pupils find activities too easy and become bored, while others find the same activity too hard and cannot begin. For example, inspectors observed some low-ability pupils being given texts that they could not read.
- Although teachers know which pupils in their classes are disadvantaged, they typically make no use of this information when planning lessons. Consequently, many disadvantaged pupils underachieve considerably, especially those who are middle ability. Similarly, the teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities does not always take account of pupils' individual needs and, therefore, these pupils do not achieve well.
- Some middle-ability pupils are not able to write clearly, with spelling, punctuation and grammar skills appropriate for their age. The teaching of literacy is not yet well embedded across subjects and so this is not improving rapidly. Similarly, numeracy skills are not sufficiently well developed in other subjects in the curriculum.
- The structure of the curriculum means that pupils fall behind in some subjects. For example, in mathematics and science, teachers have not ensured that the content required for examinations has been completed in a timely way, and they are aware that pupils are well behind where they should be. Pupils are worried that they will not catch up.
- Teachers' deployment of teaching assistants in lessons is inconsistent. In some cases, teaching assistants have a positive impact on learning because they skilfully support pupils with their work. However, in other lessons, teaching assistants do not work flexibly and some pupils do not get the individual attention they need to make progress.
- Some teaching is effective. When this is the case, teaching is characterised by strong relationships, high expectations and skilful questioning. When teaching is strong, pupils respond well and make good progress. Teaching overall is beginning to improve and to accelerate pupils' progress, especially in Year 7.

- Teaching in the sixth form is much stronger than elsewhere in the school, and some teachers specialise solely in teaching post-16 students. Classes are small, behaviour is exemplary and teachers give students individual attention and high-quality support with their work. Students make good progress as a result.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Some older pupils, in Years 10 and 11, lack the skills to express themselves confidently. Although they do respond to teachers' questioning in lessons, they are not yet independent or confident enough to be keen and enthusiastic learners.
- Pupils' attitudes to their lessons are variable. A small minority of pupils are late for lessons, or not well prepared for them, and need encouragement from staff to get to their lessons punctually.
- A minority of pupils who responded to the online questionnaire raised bullying as an issue. However, all pupils who spoke to inspectors during the inspection said that bullying is rare and that, when it occurs, their teachers deal with it well. The majority of pupils who responded said that they enjoy going to school and attending lessons.
- Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 told inspectors that leaders have recently improved many aspects of school life and, as a result, pupils are happy in school. These younger pupils feel that the school encourages them to be ambitious and that the new rewards system motivates them to work hard.
- The curriculum effectively covers a wide variety of risks to young people including, for example, e-safety and bullying. Pupils told inspectors in detail about how assemblies have made them alert to the risks of extremist views, especially online. The vast majority of pupils who filled in the online survey agree that the school encourages them to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally.
- Teachers have developed pupils' knowledge of fundamental British values well. For example, pupils have a secure knowledge of the role of voting and democracy in modern Britain.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Absence for all pupils is high and, for some groups, is extremely high. For example, in 2016, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, and of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, was in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. This is not improving. Leaders' work to improve attendance by meeting the parents of pupils with high absence is not yet effective. This is because less than half of the parents of pupils with high absence come to these meetings.

- Pupils' poor behaviour in lessons is common and teachers do not consistently tackle it. Lessons are too often disrupted by shouting out and off-task and argumentative behaviour, and teachers' attention is taken from pupils' progress. This is particularly the case in lessons for lower- and middle-ability pupils. Behaviour is better in higher-ability classes.
- Pupils and staff say that behaviour between lessons, at break and at lunchtime is slowly improving. However, pupils are reliant on high levels of supervision to maintain positive behaviour at these times, and staff need to intervene frequently to stop silly and boisterous behaviour.
- Fixed-term exclusions have risen from an already high point in 2015 because of leaders' stricter enforcement of high expectations. Discipline strategies that leaders have introduced are having an impact as the number of repeat fixed-term or internal exclusions is now reducing.
- The behaviour of students in the sixth form is good. Their attendance is high and improving, and leaders ensure that students use their unsupervised study time effectively. In most lessons, sixth form students engage themselves avidly in their studies and, as a result, make good progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils are underachieving considerably in key stages 3 and 4. Middle-ability pupils' progress in 2016 was in the bottom 10% of schools nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is particularly poor. At the end of key stage 4 in 2016, progress for these pupils was in the bottom 10% of schools nationally, and middle-ability disadvantaged pupils achieved very poorly when compared with other pupils nationally with similar starting points. These differences are not diminishing for current cohorts of pupils.
- In 2015 and 2016, progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including pupils in the school's autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) unit, was significantly below average. The progress of current pupils is not improving because teachers are not adequately providing for their individual needs in lessons.
- GCSE results in 2016 were poor across most subjects including English, languages, history and geography. The school's assessment information suggests similar outcomes in 2017.
- Pupils' progress in science and mathematics at key stage 4 is weak. Teachers acknowledge that this is because of previous weak teaching and insufficient curriculum time. This is especially the case for middle-ability pupils, whose progress is significantly behind that of their peers nationally with similar starting points.
- The school's previous policy of entering pupils for some GCSE examinations in Year 10 rather than in Year 11 continues to have a negative impact on their progress. This is the case across a range of subjects including art and design, media studies, religious education and product design.

- Leaders do not have a clear view of the progress of pupils in key stage 3 because present assessment practice is not reliable. However, evidence gathered by inspectors in lessons suggests that, at key stage 3, progress is beginning to improve, especially in Year 7.
- Some pupils have low levels of literacy and numeracy. Recent developments, such as an increase in reading and comprehension testing, are too new to have shown any impact on pupils' literacy. Leaders' actions to improve pupils' numeracy have yet to show any impact because, while leaders have taken a baseline of mathematical skills across the school, they have not used this information to improve provision.
- The most able pupils achieve well across a range of subjects including English and mathematics. They tend to be placed in higher-ability classes where teaching is strong and behaviour is good. Current cohorts of the most able pupils in the school are making strong progress. For example, in English, the most able pupils use sophisticated technical language and discuss text structure and the writer's effect on the reader in detail. In mathematics, the teachers' strong focus on mathematical reasoning and a high level of challenge, alongside skilled questioning, deepens pupils' understanding.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Information, advice and guidance for students staying on into the sixth form are good. Leaders provide 'taster' sessions in each subject and teachers give detailed advice about what each course involves, to ensure that students make informed choices. As a result, almost all students complete their courses in full.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good and leads to strong progress for students. Across a range of subjects, teachers use deep discussion, opportunities to learn concepts in greater detail and the further exploration of wider topics that interest students. This leads to high levels of engagement. Teachers in the sixth form question students skilfully. As a result of this, teachers deepen pupils' learning of complex topics.
- Outcomes in the sixth form are good. In 2016, overall, students made significantly positive progress. Progress in psychology and sociology were particularly strong.
- Students value the additional opportunities and experiences that leaders provide for them, including their tutorial time and assemblies. Students all undertake a 'Life skills' course, which they say prepares them very well for their next steps and helps them to be more aspirational about their future plans.
- All students participate in a community service scheme where they can support events and activities in the wider school. Students say that they enjoy doing activities such as being mentors to younger pupils, running sports clubs and assisting with dance classes.
- Careers advice and guidance in the sixth form are good. Leaders ensure that students understand the range of choices available to them, and provide visits to a range of universities and employers. Work experience is offered to all students and is well matched to their career aspirations. As a consequence, students make positive choices about what they will do in the sixth form, with all going on to higher education, apprenticeships or employment in 2016.

- All students who join the sixth form having not achieved at least a grade C in English and mathematics are required to follow a course to improve their standard in these subjects. The school is awaiting its first set of results from these examinations.
- Students are proud of their sixth form and talk very positively about the wide range of opportunities that leaders provide.

School details

Unique reference number	140366
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10019981

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	576
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	84
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Julie Sullivan
Headteacher	Denise Burrows
Telephone number	02476 453 121
Website	www.egacademy.org.uk
Email address	admin@egacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Information about this school

- Ernesford Grange Community Academy is a smaller than average secondary school with a sixth form and a specially resourced provision (the ASD unit) for six pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders.
- The proportions of disadvantaged pupils, and of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are both well above the national averages.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school became an academy on 1 January 2014 and is a member of the Sidney Stringer Multi-Academy Trust.
- A small number of pupils spend part of their time following personal well-being and employability courses at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons, and observed some lessons with senior leaders. They observed pupils' behaviour between lessons and at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors evaluated the work in pupils' books and in lessons across a range of subjects and year groups. They listened to pupils of different abilities read.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, representatives of the multi-academy trust, senior and middle leaders, and teachers, including those who were newly qualified.
- The views of parents were considered through 56 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's own parental questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered 36 responses to a staff questionnaire carried out during the inspection.
- Pupils met formally with inspectors through three separate focus groups, and inspectors spoke informally with a number of pupils in lessons and around the school. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Pupil View.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, action plans and minutes of governing body meetings. School policies were also reviewed, as was the school's own information about current pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour and teaching. Records relating to pupils' safety were also evaluated.

Inspection team

Dan Owen, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alun Williams	Her Majesty's Inspector
Eddie Wilkes	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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