

Greenwood Academy

Farnborough Road, Castle Vale, Birmingham, West Midlands B35 7NL

Inspection dates

6–7 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. It varies too greatly between and within subjects. To a large extent, the weaker teaching results from considerable turbulence in staffing.
- Where teaching is weaker, teachers do not set tasks that are well matched to the abilities of all the pupils in the class.
- During many lessons, teachers do not check reliably on how well pupils understand the work. As a result, they are not in a position to adjust the pace or direction of the learning.
- Teachers sometimes do not provide pupils with feedback about how to improve their work. They rarely give pupils sufficient opportunity to learn from their mistakes.
- In 2017, pupils left the school having made progress that was below the national average overall, and in particular subjects including mathematics and science.
- Although the progress of current pupils is increasing, it remains variable. Progress is typically below average in mathematics.
- Teaching across the curriculum does not contribute enough to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Subject leaders' efforts to secure a consistently good quality of teaching have been only partially successful.
- Attendance has been stubbornly low, and remains so, despite a clear upward trend.

The school has the following strengths

- Since his appointment, the headteacher has established a clear and sustainable focus on improving the quality of teaching. He has successfully raised expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour.
- Leaders' plans are firmly based on their judgements about the school. They check regularly on the impact of their actions.
- The academy trust provides highly effective support and holds leaders to account.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Pupils know that staff want the best for them.
- Leaders make good provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, including those in the specially resourced provision.
- Pupils benefit from good 16 to 19 study programmes. Courses meet students' needs and help them to achieve the next steps in their careers.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently set work which provides an appropriate level of challenge for all groups of pupils in the class
 - through questioning or otherwise, teachers check on the progress that pupils are making during the lesson so that they can adapt the work when necessary
 - teachers provide guidance to pupils on how to improve their work, and make sure that pupils make good use of it
 - teachers in subjects other than English and mathematics contribute effectively to the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy.
- Build on recent work with hard-to-reach families to ensure that the rate of pupils' attendance rapidly increases to at least the national average.
- Deepen the effectiveness of subject leaders in contributing to a consistently good quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since his appointment in September 2016, the headteacher has largely reversed the steep decline in standards, which set in shortly after the last inspection. He has overseen the move to new school buildings, and raised significantly expectations of how pupils should behave and how well they can achieve. As a clear example, he has formally extended teaching time on each weekday for Year 11 pupils.
- The headteacher has united the staff behind a clear vision of sustainable improvement. Staff, including teachers at an early stage of their careers, speak very highly of the training and support they receive. The quality of teaching is rising steadily, and pupils are making considerably better progress.
- Although a little generous, the school's self-evaluation provides a secure basis for improvement. Plans at all levels are detailed and provide clear criteria against which leaders and governors can check on progress. Leaders use facts and figures well.
- Teachers test pupils' attainment in each subject three times a year. In core subjects, the assessments are common to all schools in the trust, and the results are checked against those of pupils in other schools. Leaders use the outcomes of the tests to identify pupils at risk of falling behind, and to address any apparent weaknesses in teaching.
- The school takes every opportunity to provide pupils of all ages, including those who attend alternative provision, with good, impartial information about the educational opportunities and the career pathways available to them. Leaders work effectively with local employers, other educational organisations and community groups.
- Leaders have streamlined the school's curriculum both at key stage 4 and in the sixth form. They are ensuring that pupils' learning at key stage 3 is a good preparation for their examination courses. The result is a suitably balanced curriculum. Many pupils benefit from after-school clubs for sporting and creative activities.
- Through lessons in citizenship and religious education, assemblies and days on which the normal timetable is suspended, leaders ensure that pupils develop a good spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils have a good grasp of their roles and responsibilities, and older pupils consider that they are fully prepared for life in modern British society.
- Leaders' thorough evaluation and planning extend to their expenditure of the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up premium. Expenditure has been increasingly effective because, in each case, leaders have based their expenditure on a close analysis of the impact of the previous year's spending.
- The leadership of provision for SEN and/or disabilities is good. Newly appointed leaders have acted rapidly to make sure that there is a clear focus on pupils' academic progress as well as their welfare. They have ensured that the different sources of support, including the specially resourced provision for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), are well coordinated. Leaders have established an effective system for allocating to each pupil the support that they need and checking on its

impact.

- The academy trust has underpinned the effectiveness of leadership and management most effectively. Representatives of the trust, including peer headteachers, have given advice and support to leaders and to departments such as science. Working in partnership with other trust schools has helped the school to address its staffing difficulties.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable about their roles and keen to accept the significant responsibility they shoulder for improving the work of their departments. Their undoubted success in doing so has been slowed by the difficulty of recruiting suitably skilled staff and a little inexperience in evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders' efforts to improve attendance have been slow to take effect. More recently, the imaginative deployment of staff with a variety of expertise has enabled the school to engage effectively with families who have not supported the school. There remains much work to be done.

Governance of the school

- The recent governance of the school has been highly effective.
- The academy trust revised its governance arrangements in 2017. As a result, the current governing board has met only once. It now comprises those who work in education and know the school well, such as other local headteachers, and those with particular expertise. They are in a very strong position to continue the rigorous holding to account, which was evident under the previous arrangements.
- The governing board ensures that leaders fulfil all their obligations to keep pupils safe. Governors visit school regularly, and check that the school adheres to legislation regarding the safe recruitment of staff. They make sure that leaders address the needs of any pupils who are at risk and secure the necessary support from other agencies. Through the trust, governors regularly check on the safety of the school site. They monitor the safety of school trips and visits.
- The governors have succeeded in eliminating a substantial deficit, and the academy is now able to set a balanced budget. Governors with the right knowledge and experience check on how effectively the school spends the pupil premium and the additional funding provided to support those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. All those pupils who spoke with inspectors believe that the staff care for them, and would 'go the extra mile' to help. Leaders have provided additional training for some staff to ensure that they are skilled in assessing and meeting particular needs. Staff know the pupils and the local community well and are able to assess particular risks to pupils' safety and well-being. Staff are vigilant and know how to respond if they believe any pupil is at risk. Leaders recognise the risks associated with persistent absence and check regularly and

frequently on the welfare of pupils who have not attended for any length of time.

- Leaders work well with parents and carers and a wide range of other agencies to protect those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. They are persistent and resourceful in making sure that every child is safe.
- School policies reflect the latest requirements. Leaders make the appropriate checks when staff are appointed. They keep detailed records securely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because it remains inconsistent. The gap between the stronger teaching and the weaker teaching remains too wide. Much of the variation reflects the high turnover of staff, which has led to a significant proportion of teachers with less experience in the school.
- Teachers do not consistently set work which is well matched to the abilities of all the groups of pupils in the class. During the inspection, tasks frequently provided little challenge for the most able pupils, or the more able pupils in a particular group. Less commonly, some less able pupils struggled to understand work which was not securely based on their prior understanding.
- Too often, teachers do not do enough to check on how well pupils understand the work, and how much progress they are making during the course of the lesson. Pupils often work in silence, and questioning is limited. As a result, the teacher is unable to gauge whether it would be beneficial to change the pace or direction of the lesson.
- Teachers provide pupils with feedback in a number of ways, but commonly do not apply the school's expectations consistently. There is therefore sometimes little guidance on how pupils can improve their work. Teachers rarely check on how effectively pupils have learned from their mistakes. Work in exercise books sometimes showed that pupils remain under misapprehensions that teachers have not challenged.
- Feedback in a range of subjects sometimes addresses pupils' spelling errors, but there is no coordinated approach to improving pupils' literacy. Staff who spoke with inspectors said that they are in the early stages of developing a policy for ways in which teachers should promote pupils' numeracy in subjects other than mathematics.
- During the inspection, teachers implemented the school's behaviour policy consistently. Consequently, in most lessons, pupils complied promptly with teachers' requests. On the few occasions when pupils were awkward or uncooperative, teachers applied the specified sanctions calmly and appropriately.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects. They use the technical terms associated with a particular topic correctly and expect pupils to do the same. At key stage 4, teachers often provide pupils with clear advice about how to maximise their marks in examination papers.
- The school's records show that the quality of teaching has improved significantly, and inspection evidence confirmed this. Some teaching is very well planned to ensure that the activities are appropriate and engaging for all pupils in the class. For example, in a Year 8 religious education lesson, the teacher asked for pupils' views on a number of sharply defined moral questions, and pupils debated the issues enthusiastically. In a

Year 11 citizenship lesson about democracy, pupils' verbal responses were challenged most effectively to refine their ideas and extend their learning.

- The school gives parents accurate and attractively presented information about how their children are progressing. Through a structured conversation with a pupil's tutor, the school ensures that parents gain a good understanding of what their child's achievement means about their future prospects, and how they can improve them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils said that bullying is uncommon, and that they have confidence that staff will resolve any difficulties quickly and effectively. They can identify a number of staff they would be happy to talk to about any personal or academic problem. Pupils feel safe in all areas of the school site.
- The school teaches pupils how to be safe and healthy in several respects. They know about internet safety, road safety and the importance of mental and sexual health. Visiting speakers and special events such as mental health awareness week emphasise the importance of pupils' well-being. Staff take specific steps to develop pupils' self-confidence, both individually and as a whole.
- Staff are skilled at keeping pupils safe from a wide range of risks. They give careful and effective consideration to the welfare of those pupils who have particular needs, such as those who are part of the specially resourced provision. Leaders ensure that those pupils who attend alternative provision do so regularly, and that the provision provides appropriate social and emotional support.
- The school encourages pupils to think positively about their potential, and rewards pupils' achievements through the 'Greenwood Growth' programme. Many pupils who spoke with inspectors are proud of their successes and their school, although a minority said that there remains too much focus on sanctions. Older pupils are willing to take on responsibilities, for instance as anti-bullying ambassadors.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' attendance has been low over recent years, and remains so. A high proportion of pupils are persistently absent. This academic year, a more imaginative approach to forging links with those families who have been reluctant to work with the school is finally yielding a reduction in persistent absence and sharp increase in attendance.
- Leaders' higher expectations for conduct, reinforced when the school occupied the new building, saw a rise in fixed-term exclusion. The rise reflected the refusal of a small minority of pupils to accept the school's routines, rather than serious instances of misbehaviour. The rate of exclusion is now declining. The rate of permanent exclusion, which had also been high, has dropped sharply, and is now approaching the national average.

- All agree that behaviour in the school has improved markedly, particularly this academic year. The improvement reflects the consistency with which staff have adopted the behaviour policy, and the care with which staff follow up any significant incidents.
- Most presentation in workbooks is of a tolerable standard, and some is exemplary. In the main, pupils work hard in lessons, and concentrate well. However, a few younger pupils behave immaturely in a small minority of lessons, typically when they do not understand the work or it is too easy for them.
- Pupils generally behave responsibly in their movement around the school and at social times. Pupils who spoke with inspectors have few concerns about the behaviour of others, but said that some silly behaviour persists. During the inspection, inspectors saw no instances of aggression, but a couple of instances of childish conduct.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because they remain inconsistent. The school's current pupils are making progress that varies between subjects, and often varies substantially between classes in the same subject. The school has identified these disparities and sought to address them, for example by allocating more experienced teachers to classes that have fallen behind. However, there remains some way to go to ensure that pupils' progress is strong across the school.
- In 2017, pupils left Year 11 having made progress overall which was below that of pupils nationally. Their progress was also below average in mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and humanities subjects. Progress in 2017 was weaker overall than it had been for the cohort which left the school in 2016.
- Information supplied by the school and generally supported by inspection evidence shows that the progress of current pupils across the school has improved considerably. It is, nevertheless, inconsistent. In most year groups, the school's information shows that progress is not swift enough in mathematics. Girls generally make better progress than boys.
- Evidence from pupils' work showed that the progress of current pupils varies too greatly between different classes in the same subject. The information provided by the school's tracking of pupils' attainment confirms this. As leaders are aware, it is only by improving the quality of the weaker teaching that every pupil will have the best opportunity to fulfil their potential.
- The school's information also shows that the progress of the most able pupils often lags a little behind that of their peers. This disparity reflects the infrequency with which teachers set work that fully stretches the most able and so enables them to attain the deeper understanding and greater knowledge of which they are capable.
- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils, who make up the majority of each cohort, left the school having made progress which was significantly below average and below that of other pupils in the school. However, the judicious use of the pupil premium has increased the achievement of the disadvantaged pupils, so that the progress of current disadvantaged pupils is now in line with that of their classmates. Inspection evidence identified no differences between the attitudes and achievements of disadvantaged and

non-disadvantaged pupils in the school.

- Leaders' recent focus on the achievement of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has yielded an improvement in their progress. Information supplied by the school showed that these pupils generally make progress in line with that of their peers, often from low starting points. Although there is some variation in the progress of individuals, most pupils who are part of the specially resourced provision are making good progress.
- Leaders are promoting reading well. Pupils read regularly in form time. During the inspection, several pupils were given the opportunity to read aloud in class, and did so fluently. Inspectors saw some work of a particularly high standard in English and in the creative arts.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders have taken decisive action to improve the quality of the 16 to 19 study programmes. The sixth form, established just before the last inspection, initially sought to cater for too many pupils, and students were placed on inappropriate courses. As a result, a high proportion did not complete their study programmes. Leaders now ensure that students follow courses which are well matched to their abilities and interests.
- Sixth form students and key stage 4 pupils told inspectors that they have received impartial careers advice, and that their decision about whether to continue their studies in the school was based on how well the courses met their aspirations and abilities. Equally, students reported that they received good advice about their options when leaving the sixth form. In 2017, all students who left Year 13 found a place at university or in employment.
- The strategic management of the sixth form is well integrated into the school as a whole. Regular assessments enable leaders to identify any students at risk of underachieving. Students are subject to the same expectations as those for pupils in the main school, so that, for example, they receive a detention for arriving late. Catch-up sessions are available for any students who fall behind with their work. Non-teaching staff are always on hand to address any concerns as they arise.
- Students' study programmes meet all requirements. Students benefit from well-planned academic or applied programmes, and the opportunity to re-sit GCSEs in English or mathematics if they have not already attained a standard pass. Since 2017, all students have been expected to undertake work experience. Through tutor time, assemblies and visits from outside speakers, students learn about appropriate social and moral issues. The school ensures that they understand how to keep themselves safe, including from the risks of radicalisation or extremism.
- Students' non-qualification activity includes physical education lessons. Many also take up the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular sporting or artistic activities.
- During the lessons observed during the inspection, students were enthusiastic and fully engaged in their learning. Teachers were knowledgeable and used questioning effectively to extend students' answers and deepen their understanding. They were providing students with effective guidance on how to conduct research and learn

independently.

- In 2017, students left the sixth form having made progress that was broadly average both in academic and applied courses. Disadvantaged students achieved as well as their peers. The relatively small number of students entered for each subject and the changes year on year in the courses that students follow mean that there are few patterns that can be precisely identified in 16 to 19 outcomes, but students have generally performed well in English.
- Students' work showed that they are usually making good progress. Although some students begin their courses from relatively low starting points, the small size of the sixth form and of most sixth-form classes gives teachers every opportunity to provide individual support and guidance.

School details

Unique reference number	139048
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10037152

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 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	821
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	66
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Beverley Perin
Headteacher	Allen Bird
Telephone number	0121 464 6101
Website	sites.google.com/a/aetinet.org/greenwood-academy
Email address	contactus@greenwoodacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	12 November 2014

Information about this school

- Greenwood Academy is slightly smaller than the average-sized secondary school, but the school roll is increasing. It has a small sixth form. The school is sponsored by the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. Other pupils are drawn from several different ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The school has specially resourced provision for 32 pupils who have ASD. These pupils attend full-time and spend the majority of their time in mainstream

lessons.

- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is very high.
- A small number of key stage 3 pupils access full-time alternative provision. At key stage 4, a few pupils access full-time alternative provision but the majority of those accessing alternative education receive part-time provision. Pupils attend East Birmingham Network Academy, James Brindley School and some work with Academy 21, an online education provider.
- The headteacher took up his post in September 2016. One of the deputy headteachers was appointed for September 2017. The current coordinator of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities took up the post in January 2018. He works part-time in the school, and part-time at another school in the trust.
- In 2017, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress for pupils by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 41 lessons. Two observations were conducted jointly with a senior leader. Inspectors also observed several form groups at tutor time. They visited the internal exclusion room, and the specialist provision for pupils who have ASD. Inspectors observed pupils' conduct between lessons and at social times.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders and class teachers. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body and the academy trust. One inspector held a telephone conversation with a trust adviser who is supporting the science department.
- Four groups of pupils, three chosen at random and one by the school, met with inspectors. Inspectors spoke with a large number of pupils informally.
- The inspection team looked at many workbooks in their visits to classrooms. They scrutinised in depth the English, mathematics and science books of a number of pupils in Year 8 and Year 10, working alongside the relevant subject leaders. The lead inspector considered carefully information about pupils' current and recent academic performance.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included development plans and evaluations of the school's progress; the report of a recent visit by representatives of the regional schools commissioner; the minutes of governors' meetings; school policies; standardised tests used by the school; and reports to parents. Inspectors scrutinised in detail records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- The inspection team took account of the 51 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and comments made using the free-text service. They also considered 59 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
David Hughes	Ofsted Inspector
David Hermitt	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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