

Inspection of Grace Academy Coventry

Wigston Road, Coventry, West Midlands CV2 2RH

Inspection dates: 17–18 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Grace Academy is an improving school. Many staff and pupils told inspectors how much the school has improved. A new principal took up post this term. Morale among staff is high. Leaders want all pupils to do well. Plans are already in place to ensure the school continues to improve.

Leaders know that aspects of the curriculum need to get better. In the past, the school did not plan pupils' learning well. This is now much better, but there remains room for improvement. Pupils still do not remember what they have learned as well as they could. Staff are now receiving better training. Leaders are confident that this will lead to further improvements.

Pupils are happy. They say that they are well looked after and feel safe. Incidents of bullying are low. Pupils feel confident that staff deal with any incidents that do occur. Pupils know who they can talk to about any worries they may have.

Most pupils now behave well in lessons and throughout the day. However, some pupils do not always behave well and sometimes disrupt learning for others.

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

The quality of education has improved since the last inspection. Leaders are making a difference. The new principal is providing determined leadership. Leaders recognise that pupils are making more progress in some subjects, but not in others.

Leaders provide a curriculum that is ambitious. Pupils study a broad range of subjects. This includes the option to study vocational subjects at key stage 4. Pupils' learning is now organised well in almost all subjects. In the few subjects where this is still not the case, there has been some improvement.

Teaching is improving. Teachers are keen to improve their practice, and they value the training that leaders have given them. Some weaknesses remain, though. Teaching does not ensure that pupils remember what they have been taught as well as it could.

Pupils and staff agree that behaviour has improved. Inspection evidence confirms this. However, a small number of pupils continue to disrupt learning. Some parents continue to be sceptical and are vocal in their view of behaviour at the school. Inspectors found that most of their concerns are unjustified.

Pupils do not attend school as often as they should. The school has introduced many strategies to try to improve attendance. Some of these are working but, even so, attendance is still low.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in school. Leaders have made good progress in improving this aspect since the last inspection.

Leaders give teachers helpful information about these pupils' needs. Many teachers are using this information when planning lessons.

Leaders care about their pupils and ensure that pupils learn about healthy living and keeping safe. This includes learning about online safety, knife crime and gang culture. School leaders place a strong emphasis on the school's spiritual and moral values. Pupils recognise the importance of 'potential, excellence, respect, integrity and grace'. Pupils take part in different activities that support this. For example, pupils support many different charities. They are proactive in their support of the local foodbank and night shelter. Pupils reflect on their own contribution to this work and this informs future actions. Pupils say that they enjoy the broad range of activities offered by the school. There is a well-planned programme for careers education across all year groups. This helps pupils, including those in the sixth form, to be better prepared for their next steps.

Students in the sixth-form value the support given to them. They enjoy good relationships with their teachers. Students want to achieve well. In some subjects, teachers do not know what students know and understand. This means that teachers do not consistently help students increase their knowledge and understanding.

The principal and senior leaders provide effective leadership. They are well supported by trustees and members of the Academy Improvement Board (AIB). This is ensuring that leaders are not complacent. They know what still needs to improve. The Tove Learning Trust (TLT) is providing effective support in ensuring this happens.

Staff and pupils enjoy being at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils well and act quickly when concerns arise. Leaders work well with other agencies to keep vulnerable pupils safe from harm. Record-keeping is thorough. Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to stay safe. For example, pupils learn about online safety and knife crime.

Staff know that keeping pupils safe is everyone's responsibility. Leaders give pupils strong support and pupils know who to go to if they need help or support.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers have begun to focus their efforts on helping pupils to remember more of what they have been taught. This is proving successful in some subjects, for example in English and in science. However, this remains an inconsistent picture across all subjects. Too often, pupils cannot recall important knowledge. This means they find it more difficult to learn new content. Leaders should ensure that

pupils routinely recall what they have been taught so that remembering important knowledge becomes a habit for them.

- Staff and parents recognise that the school is improving. They also recognise that standards of behaviour are improving. However, there are incidents of low-level disruption from a small number of pupils. Leaders need to ensure that staff are more consistent in their application of the school's behaviour management policy. Leaders also need to ensure that all pupils respect and follow the school's expectations for their conduct.
- Pupils do not attend school regularly enough. The school needs better systems for encouraging pupils to attend well.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	135335
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10111688
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	679
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	60
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christopher Watt
Principal	Janina Taylor
Website	www.graceacademy.org.uk/coventry
Date of previous inspection	6–7 February 2018

Information about this school

- The academy joined the TLT on 1 April 2019.
- A new principal joined the school on 1 September 2019.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- We met with the principal and other senior leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead.
- We met with the chair of the board of trustees, a member of the AIB and the

chair of the AIB. We also met with the chief executive officer of the TLT and the director of education at TLT.

- We talked to many pupils about their learning and their attitudes to, and opinions about, school. We observed pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes, and as they moved around the school. We visited morning tutor periods.
- We scrutinised several documents, including those related to safeguarding and child protection. We checked that the single central register of employment checks on adults in school contained all the required information.
- As part of this inspection, we paid particular attention to English, science, history, and business studies. In these subjects, we met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils.

Inspection team

Richard Gill, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sara Arkle	Ofsted Inspector
Russell Hinton	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Walters	Ofsted Inspector

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