

# Inspection of Whitley Academy

Abbey Road, Whitley, Coventry, West Midlands CV3 4BD

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Inspection dates: 8–9 January 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Sixth-form provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

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

This school does not give pupils an acceptable education. Too many pupils behave inappropriately in lessons and at other times of the day. Attendance is also poor. A substantial minority of pupils regularly arrive at lessons very late.

There has been a very high turnover of teachers recently. Many teachers are inexperienced or new to the school. This poses problems in supporting new staff and ensuring consistency of practice. The quality of teaching varies considerably.

Pupils' views of the school are very mixed. Some are positive, but many are not. Pupils are safe in school despite the poor behaviour of some. Bullying is not common, and it is mostly dealt with appropriately. However, a sizeable minority of pupils and parents do not have confidence in staff to tackle bullying or other problems.

Senior leaders are honest, open and show integrity. They understand the school's weaknesses and are determined to see it improve. They have recently sought help from the local authority. Most senior leaders teach many lessons to cover gaps in the timetable. As a result, they do not have enough time to carry out their leadership responsibilities.

At the time of inspection, the school had no effective governance in place.

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

Recent months have been very difficult for the school and its senior leaders. Several staff have left the school and others have been absent. Most of the school's governors resigned in December 2019. Senior leaders have taken on additional responsibilities and several now teach for a high proportion of the week. Senior leaders do not have the time they need to carry out their responsibilities adequately. The situation is not sustainable.

Senior leaders have requested support from the local authority. The local authority has very recently put in place some support for the school. Senior leaders appreciate this and there are some very early signs that it is beginning to help.

The learning of pupils is planned and organised well in most subjects. Clear work schemes set out what pupils should learn and when they should learn it. When taught by established teachers, pupils who attend school regularly learn well. This is not the experience of many pupils. The school has many new and inexperienced teachers. Leaders and established staff do their best to support them, but do not have the time to do so adequately. Consequently, teaching varies in quality and does not help pupils to learn as well as it should. Results in GCSE examinations have been very weak in most subjects over recent years.

The behaviour of some pupils is a serious concern. Too many lessons are affected by low-level or significant disruption. Lunchtimes and breaktimes are far from calm. Even when staff are present, some pupils do not behave well. Too many pupils are late to school and slow to move from one lesson to the next. During lessons, there are usually several pupils wandering around the school's corridors. The attendance of a sizeable minority of pupils is low and declining. The attendance of pupils currently in Year 11 is a particular concern.

The majority of pupils behave well throughout the day. They attend school regularly and punctually. They are polite and courteous. They are desperate to see the school improve.

Teaching assistants give effective support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders ensure that teachers have accurate information about pupils' needs. Some teachers use this information well when planning learning, but others do not. The experience of pupils with SEND in lessons therefore varies in quality.

The school provides many opportunities that contribute well to pupils' personal development. These include sports clubs, annual musical productions, a school council, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and off-site visits. Many pupils take advantage of these. All pupils in Year 7 attend enrichment clubs every Monday afternoon. Leaders recognise that the range and take-up of opportunities need to be better planned and checked to ensure that no pupils miss out.

The school's careers programme is well established, although repeated changes to its leadership have impaired its development. The programme helps pupils make informed choices about what they will do when they leave the school. Almost all pupils and students who leave the school at the end of Year 11 or Year 13 move on to appropriate education or training.

The sixth form provides students with a good quality of education. The weaknesses that exist elsewhere in the school are not evident in the sixth form. This area is well led. Students choose from a good range of subjects. Their learning is planned well and they achieve results that are comparable to students nationally with similar starting points. Students conduct themselves well. They attend regularly and behave well. They provide good role models for younger pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Staff have been trained appropriately. They pass on to leaders any concerns they have about pupils. Leaders deal with these concerns correctly, involving outside agencies when appropriate.

Some pupils who spoke with us and some parents who completed Parent View said that pupils do not feel safe in school. They expressed other concerns, most notably about behaviour. We concluded that pupils and parents are right to be concerned about behaviour. However, we also concluded that pupils are safe in the school.

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

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

- Most of the school's governors resigned in December 2019. Since that time, there has been no effective governance of the school. At the time of the inspection, plans were in hand to strengthen the governing body with new, highly experienced, individuals. The trust's members should ensure that effective governance arrangements are in place.
- Most senior leaders teach a considerable number of lessons each week. Several have taken on additional responsibilities to cover for absent colleagues. This means that most senior leaders do not have the time to carry out their responsibilities as well as they should. The impact of this lack of capacity is evident in many areas of school life, including providing support for new staff and tackling issues with behaviour and attendance. Governors should ensure that senior leaders have sufficient time and support to be able to carry out their responsibilities effectively.
- The school has suffered from a very high turnover of teachers in recent times. It has also struggled to recruit high-quality teachers in several subjects, including mathematics and science. At the time of inspection, the school had vacancies for two teachers of English. This staffing turbulence has contributed to the weaknesses in teaching and pupils' behaviour. Leaders and governors should ensure that teacher turnover is reduced and that new teachers are supported well, so that there is greater consistency and quality of practice across the school.
- A minority of pupils do not behave as they should. Low-level disruption is evident in too many lessons. Some lessons are disrupted significantly. Behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and between lessons is poor. Some pupils pay little heed to members of staff who challenge their poor behaviour. Leaders should ensure that pupils' behaviour improves considerably, both in lessons and at other times of the day.
- Attendance is low and declining. The attendance of some groups of pupils, for example those in Year 11, is a significant concern. Similarly, punctuality to school and to lessons is poor. Leaders should ensure that pupils' attendance and punctuality improve considerably.

## **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 are the school and you are 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136840
<b>Local authority</b>	Coventry
<b>Inspection number</b>	10134083
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	897
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	100
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Jamie
<b>Principal</b>	Kathryn Wright
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.whitleyacademy.com">http://www.whitleyacademy.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6–7 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has not undergone any significant change since the last inspection.
- At the time of this inspection, the principal was absent from the school. The governing body had not met since July 2019. Most of the school’s governors resigned in December 2019. There is currently an acting chair of governors.
- Approximately 10 pupils study for part of the week, away from the school, at one of the following alternative providers: Creative Optimistic Visions, Central Building and Welding Academy, Nulogic Training, Positive Youth Foundation, Educ8, Heart of England Training and Coventry College.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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.

- We met with the acting principal, the two vice principals, one of whom is the designated safeguarding lead, and the three assistant vice principals. The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority and the school's acting chair of governors.
- We talked to many pupils about their learning and their attitudes to, and opinions about, school. We observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime and as they moved around the school. We visited several tutor periods.
- We scrutinised several documents, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection. We checked that the single central record contained all required information.
- We took account of parents' views by considering the 77 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire as well as questionnaires completed by parents at recent parents' evenings.
- As part of this inspection, we paid particular attention to English, mathematics, science and history. In these subjects, we met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Alun Williams, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Gill	Ofsted Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Considine	Ofsted Inspector

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