

Inspection of Washwood Heath Academy

Burney Lane, Stechford, Birmingham, West Midlands B8 2AS

Inspection dates: 3–4 March 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have a clear and ambitious view of what pupils should learn. They have reviewed the curriculum, and made changes in the short and longer term. As a result, pupils up to Year 11 learn a good range of subjects. Teachers know their subjects well. They make sure that work builds upon what pupils already know and can do.

Pupils behave very well in lessons. Staff talk through disputes and any poor conduct with pupils, and this helps their behaviour to improve. Some behaviour outside of lessons is less positive but leaders are dealing with this. Bullying is rare and, when it does occur, staff sort it out effectively.

This is a school for everyone. Staff work hard to support pupils who are new to the school or who have particular needs. Pupils respect different cultures and traditions and get along well with each other. Pupils, particularly in the primary phase, display a good level of independence for their age.

Leaders know their school very well. They use research to help it to improve. Leaders check carefully on the impact of their decisions. Significant changes to the sixth form have led to students learning well.

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

The trustees of the multi-academy trust (MAT) have a clear moral and educational vision for the school and how it can help the community. Leaders are beginning to make useful links with the other schools in the MAT. There are joint activities that enrich pupils' experience and encourage teamwork. The MAT also supports staff training well.

Leaders are taking effective action to ensure that all pupils learn well across a wide range of subjects. Leaders at all levels have a good understanding of how to plan work so that it extends what pupils know and can do. Teachers build in revision and recall to help pupils remember knowledge over the long term. In science, booklets for each topic enable pupils to see how their current learning fits in with what they have already learned and what they will do next. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and how to teach them. They ensure consistently that pupils learn and then use the new vocabulary associated with each topic. Leaders involve a wide range of other agencies to assess those with additional needs. Teachers then make good provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils get off to a good start in the Reception Year. Here, the curriculum is well planned to develop children's core skills and give them the knowledge that they need for the primary phase. Children quickly learn to relate well to adults and to each other. There is a sharp focus on the teaching of early reading, and children learn phonics from the start. They follow a clear programme that introduces them to

letters and sounds in a structured way. Any children who struggle with learning receive additional support to make sure that they do not fall behind.

In the secondary phase, strong subject leadership is improving pupils' achievement in those subjects where it has been lower, such as mathematics and modern foreign languages. There is work to do in planning the curriculum to make sure that there is as smooth a transition as possible between the primary and the secondary phases, and for those pupils who join Year 7 from a different school. Some Year 7 pupils are unnecessarily repeating work. Leaders have made alterations to the school's curriculum so that, from September 2020, pupils in Year 9 will study all the subjects in the national curriculum as well as tasters for those new subjects they might choose at key stage 4. Pupils currently in Year 9 benefit from enrichment days that ensure curriculum breadth.

Leaders have relaunched the sixth form, tightening the academic requirements for entry. They have planned a curriculum that takes good account of local training and employment opportunities. Teachers have a very high level of subject knowledge. Although in the past achievement on some courses has been disappointing, current students are learning well.

Pupils behave very well in lessons because there is a clear understanding of what the school expects, and they want to succeed. Sometimes scruffy presentation of their written work does not reflect the commitment to their studies. Pupils concentrate well and listen carefully. Staff in the primary phase have been particularly successful in developing pupils' independence. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson pupils chose their own practical resources to help them to solve problems. The main school building has narrow corridors and some pupils have raised concerns about behaviour in the corridors. Leaders have listened and taken action to make sure pupils are and feel safe. The school's records show that the frequency of inappropriate behaviour and the use of exclusion are declining.

Leaders have taken effective steps to deepen pupils' cultural knowledge and experience. For example, Year 9 pupils visit Stratford-on-Avon. Pupils have particularly rich opportunities in music. The school works in partnership with the National Youth Orchestra, and a very high proportion of pupils receive instrumental tuition. Pupils can play a variety of sports after school. Staff have begun to track which pupils take up these opportunities to try to ensure fair access.

Pupils respect those from other cultures and backgrounds. They can act as mentors or prefects to build their confidence and leadership skills. All older pupils receive impartial careers advice and have the opportunity for work experience. Almost all pupils leaving the school go on to appropriate education or training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are very aware of the varied risks that pupils face, including those relating to radicalisation and extremism. They provide a wide-ranging programme that explains these risks to pupils. It includes, for example, visitors who explain their personal experience of overcoming particular difficulties. Leaders have strong links with other organisations that protect children, and use them well. Staff are trained to spot any pupils who may be at risk of harm.

Leaders make appropriate checks on those staff who join the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The planning of the curriculum to ensure the smooth transition between the primary and the secondary phases of the school is at an early stage. Year 7 pupils told us that they had already covered some work. Leaders should work with subject leads in the primary phase and those in partner primary schools to identify clearly what knowledge and skills pupils acquire in key stage 2. This will enable them to design a key stage 3 curriculum that is well matched to pupils' prior learning.
- Although leaders set clear expectations for how pupils should present their work, some pupils' workbooks are untidy, or even scruffy. Leaders should ensure that pupils are aware of the importance of tidiness, and how this helps with clear thinking and revision. Subject leads should make sure through existing monitoring arrangements that all teachers maintain the school's expectations.
- Leaders recognise that some behaviour outside lessons does not meet their expectations. The main school building has narrow corridors, and the number of pupils exceeds its planned capacity. Some pupils have concerns about this. In response, staff provide a good level of supervision so that pupils are safe. However, leaders should take strategic actions to improve the flow of pupils around the school to minimise overcrowding and congestion.

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

Unique reference number	139888
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10126818
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,633
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	142
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Pete Anstey
Headteacher	Lynn Petrie
Website	http://washwood.academy
Date of previous inspection	3 March 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- In 2017, the MAT added a primary phase to the existing secondary school. Since March 2019, primary pupils have been accommodated in new purpose-built accommodation. The primary phase has one form of entry, and there are currently pupils in Reception and Years 1, 2, 5 and 6.
- The headteacher was appointed permanently to her post in March 2019. Two of the deputy headteachers joined the school at the same time.
- The school provides full-time alternative provision for 14 key stage 4 pupils at East Birmingham Network 1, East Birmingham Network 2 or James Brindley School.

Information about this inspection

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

- We met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. We also met with a range of other staff, including newly qualified teachers. I met with representatives of the trust and the academy advisory board (AAB).
- When inspecting safeguarding, we looked at the school's procedures for recruiting and checking on staff. We also considered the effectiveness of staff training, and the procedures to keep pupils safe.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' plans to improve the school, records of AAB meetings, and the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- We took account of the 28 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents and carers. We also considered 66 responses to the survey for staff. We scrutinised 377 responses to the questionnaire for pupils.
- We focused on reading, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and religious education during the inspection. One inspector listened to pupils in the Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2 reading. We considered the school's curriculum plans, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors also met with pupils and with teachers to discuss learning in these subjects.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Graham Tyrer	Ofsted Inspector
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