

# Inspection of The Edge Academy

946, Bristol Road South, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 2LQ

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Inspection dates: 15–16 June 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Inadequate

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

All staff are committed to the 'Edge Pledge'. It successfully helps pupils to make positive choices to keep themselves safe, encourages pupils to aspire to succeed and develops pupils' respect for one another and others. Pupils benefit from positive learning experiences, which help them to re-engage back into education.

Pastoral support is highly effective. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils feel that staff respect them, and say they are 'listened to'. Staff provide pupils with individual support, when needed, to help them manage their emotions and behaviour. Pupils appreciate staff's support and how it helps them to learn in a calm environment. Pupils readily share any concerns they have with staff. They know that staff will help them to sort out any problems quickly, including bullying. However, pupils say that bullying is rare.

Leaders provide pupils with learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom. The life-skills curriculum teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe outside school. The school awards programme gives pupils opportunities to learn brick laying skills, Russian and food hygiene safety. This helps to raise pupils' ambitions for the future and encourages them to stay in education after Year 11.

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

Leaders have worked extremely well together, using their various strengths, to drive significant improvements across the school. They have provided staff with support and training to enable them to carry out their roles effectively. Staff have high aspirations for pupils and work very well as a team to help achieve those aspirations.

All pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that staff understand and know how to support pupils' additional needs. The SENCo provides staff with specialist advice and training to help them further adapt their teaching when needed. For example, staff recently had training to help them to understand mental health illness. The highly effective provision for pupils with SEND enables them to engage positively and successfully in their learning.

Staff provide pupils with exceptional pastoral support. 'Pupil information profiles' are shared so that all staff understand pupils' pastoral and academic needs to enable them to provide the right support. This helps pupils to settle quickly and develop more positive attitudes to learning. Pupils appreciate the care they receive and trust staff. The positive relationships and supportive school environment encourage pupils to attend school regularly. However, some pupils arrive at school late and miss the start of the first lesson. This limits their learning in these lessons.

Pupils join the school at different points throughout the year. Teachers find out what pupils know and understand in reading, English and mathematics very quickly and

adapt and personalise the school's curriculum skilfully in response to their needs. Reading is a high priority and pupils receive intensive support to improve their reading skills. Teachers match English and mathematics teaching very closely to pupils' specific needs and this helps pupils to make strong progress in these subjects.

Leaders gain a detailed overview of key stage 4 pupils' GCSE options and pathways before they begin their placements. They provide these pupils with a curriculum to help them complete their qualifications. However, leaders have less information about key stage 3 pupils' prior learning in subjects other than English and mathematics. This makes it more challenging for teachers in subjects, such as art and science to know how to adapt and plan the curriculum to help pupils build on their prior learning.

Pupils' personal development is supported extremely well by the life-skills and well-being curricula. For example, they teach pupils about healthy relationships, possible future careers and British values. This helps pupils to consider how they can make a positive contribution to society in the future. However, pupils have not had sufficient opportunities to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. While leaders have plans in place to develop ICT, they are yet to be fully implemented so pupils' ICT skills remain weak.

The governors' wide educational expertise enables them to challenge leaders effectively to check that the school is continuing to improve. Governors also provide leaders with support to enable them to carry out their roles successfully. For example, governors commissioned additional support to further develop the IT curriculum. Governors' support, challenge and close working relationships with leaders and staff has been a key part in the significant improvements that the school has made.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff go to great lengths to keep pupils as safe as possible. Leaders make sure that staff understand how to report concerns and what to do if they feel pupils are not getting the help they need. Staff are highly vigilant and react quickly when they have any concerns about pupils' safety and well-being. Leaders make sure that they know about any potential risks to pupils outside the school through linking with groups, such as the local police and schools' panel. This enables leaders to plan additional support to help pupils understand how to keep themselves safe when they are not in school.

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

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

- Leaders do not gain an overview of what key stage 3 pupils have learned in their home school in the wider curriculum before they start their placement. This makes it more challenging for teachers to plan work that builds on pupils' prior learning in subjects such as science and art. Leaders should further develop transition arrangements so that there is a more detailed overview of what key stage 3 pupils have learned across the wider curriculum. This will enable teachers to plan a curriculum that can build on pupils' prior learning more effectively.
- Leaders have taken very effective action to improve pupils' overall attendance. However, some pupils continue to arrive late at the start of the school day and miss the start of the first lesson. This negatively impacts on their learning in this lesson. Leaders should take further action to ensure that pupils arrive at school promptly so that they do not miss out on any learning.
- Pupils have weak ICT skills. Leaders have taken action to address this and have plans in place to develop an effective ICT curriculum. However, these plans are at an early stage of implementation and, therefore, pupils' ICT skills are yet to develop. Leaders should continue to implement their ICT curriculum, along with the planned staff training, to improve pupils' ICT skills.

## 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>	142071
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10184713
<b>Type of school</b>	Alternative provision
<b>School category</b>	Academy alternative provision free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	67
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair</b>	Ruth Harker
<b>Principal</b>	Andrew Wakefield
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.theedgeacademy.co.uk">www.theedgeacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 February 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The academy is an alternative provision free school which works with pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion. The aim of the alternative provision is to integrate pupils successfully into a mainstream school. Placements are intended to be short-term.
- The school uses two alternative providers: Titan St George's Academy and Reach School. Both are situated in Birmingham.
- All pupils have a special educational need and a small proportion have an education, health and care plan. The majority of pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs.

## 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 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspectors focused on reading, English, IT and art as part of this inspection. They also looked at science, mathematics and the life skills curriculum on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors visited lessons in all year groups. On the first day of the inspection the lead inspector was accompanied on the lesson visits by the principal.
- Inspectors observed pupils from key stages 3 and 4 read to a member of staff.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, senior leaders, subject leaders and staff to talk about the quality of education, behaviour and safeguarding at the school.
- The lead inspector met with the principal and the designated safeguarding leaders. Inspectors also met with the leaders of special educational needs, pastoral care, behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector met with four members of the governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation provided by the school. They looked at the school's website, school improvement planning, school policies, curriculum documents, safeguarding information, special educational needs information and records of attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors met with a small group of parents and considered their views.
- Inspectors considered the 16 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. Inspectors also considered the 12 responses to Parent View. There were no pupil questionnaire and parent free-text options during this inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Ann Pritchard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Howes

Her Majesty's Inspector

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