

Inspection of The Hereford Academy

Marlbrook Road, Redhill, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 7NG

Inspection dates: 30 June to 1 July 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Tolerance and respect for others run through everything this school does. Governors and leaders set a fine example. Staff are committed to getting the best from pupils and keeping them safe. The school is a welcoming and caring community where pupils are safe, happy and well supported.

The quality of education pupils receive has improved considerably in the last two years. In many subjects, most pupils are learning well. But there is room for more improvement. Learning is not as well planned in some subjects as it is in others. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not learning as well as they should in several subjects.

The school is an attractive, calm and orderly place for pupils to study. Most pupils behave very well. They are keen to learn. They appreciate their teachers and other staff. Pupils trust adults to deal with problems when they arise, including bullying.

The school encourages pupils' personal development particularly well. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is of high quality. Pupils receive excellent careers education. Pupils benefit from a wide range of musical, sporting, leadership and other opportunities. The school and its pupils actively serve the local community.

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

In most subjects, pupils' learning is well planned. For example, in English and history, pupils' learning builds logically from year to year. Teachers are clear about what they expect pupils to learn and remember, and they check that this is the case. In a few subjects, plans do not set out clearly enough what pupils are expected to know and remember. As a result, teachers cannot check pupils' learning as well as they should.

Leaders have provided teachers with training about the characteristics of effective teaching. Teachers appreciate this. In most departments, teachers have begun to apply this training to their own subject. However, there remains variability. In some subjects, teachers do not apply the characteristics of effective teaching that leaders expect to their subject as well as they could.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has been in post for six months and provision for pupils with SEND has improved over that time. Teachers now receive accurate information about pupils' needs. They also receive advice about how to adapt the curriculum for pupils with SEND. Teachers are not using this information consistently well. So, pupils with SEND are not learning as well as they should in several subjects.

Very few pupils study a foreign language to GCSE. This is because of weaknesses in the French curriculum in recent years. Inspectors confirmed that pupils' learning in

languages is now much improved. Leaders expect more pupils to continue with languages to GCSE in the future.

The school's work to improve pupils' reading is proving successful. Teachers in all subjects focus on improving pupils' vocabulary and spelling. Form tutors read to their form groups. Pupils are encouraged to read books. Staff provide good support for pupils who find reading difficult.

The promotion of pupils' personal development is exemplary. Leaders carefully plan and review this provision with pupils' needs and interests in mind. The high-quality PSHE programme covers difficult topics skilfully and sensitively. Pupils receive excellent careers advice and guidance. The school provides a wide range of clubs, groups and leadership opportunities. Most pupils take part. Staff encourage respect for others, especially those with protected characteristics. Leaders have created an ethos of tolerance, respect and understanding throughout the school.

The school's staff form a united and committed team. Leaders are mindful of staff's well-being and workload, for example when introducing new initiatives. Almost all staff who responded to Ofsted's online inspection questionnaire said the school is well led and they are proud to work there.

The Diocese of Hereford Multi-Academy Trust (DHMAT) and the school's governors have played a full part in the school's recent improvement. They are committed to the school. They provide effective support and challenge to its leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a strong culture of caring for pupils and keeping them safe. All staff understand this is their top priority. Staff are alert to the signs that pupils might need extra help. They pass concerns to leaders who deal with them quickly and appropriately. Leaders are tenacious in seeking to ensure that pupils get the help they need. They regularly challenge outside agencies when pupils are not being supported well.

Pupils, parents and staff say that pupils are safe and well cared for in the school. Inspectors agree.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although a great deal of work has been put into improving the curriculum, too much variability remains. In some subjects, plans do not spell out precisely what pupils are expected to know and remember after having been taught a topic. How well teachers put the curriculum into practice varies too. For example, teachers' checks on learning are more successful in some subjects than others. Leaders

should ensure that the curriculum is equally well planned and put into practice in all subjects.

- Provision for pupils with SEND has improved since the SENCo's arrival in January 2021. However, the curriculum in several subjects does not meet the needs of these pupils well enough. Typically, teachers do not use information about pupils' needs to adapt the lesson content and/or their teaching approach. Consequently, these pupils are not learning as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is appropriately designed, adapted or developed to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

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 [here](#).

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	135662
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10184716
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	535
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Will Finn
Headteacher	Michael Stoppard
Website	www.theherefordacademy.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	8 and 9 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has had five headteachers in the past five years. The current headteacher joined the school on 1 June 2019.
- Since its last section 5 inspection, more than half the school's staff have left and have been replaced. The senior leadership team, in its current form, has been in place for six months.
- The sixth form closed at the end of the 2019 summer term.
- At the time of its last inspection, the school's sponsor was The Bishop Anthony Educational Trust. The trust has been reconstituted and is now called DHMAT.
- The school's governance is carried out by the strategic task group (STG) and the local academy board (LAB). The STG focuses on school improvement priorities. The LAB manages the other governance functions.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in November 2015. The next one is due to take place in the spring of 2022.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and members of the STG and LAB.
- Inspectors considered safeguarding by meeting with the designated safeguarding lead, scrutinising policies and records relating to child protection and examining the safeguarding checks made on staff before they join the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised several documents, including the school's self-evaluation, its improvement plan, minutes of STG and LAB meetings and several policies.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils at lunchtime. They met more formally with groups of pupils in Years 7, 9 and 10.
- Parents' views were taken into account by considering the 20 responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, including the 11 written contributions.
- Inspectors considered the 43 responses from staff to their online inspection questionnaire.
- As part of this inspection, particular consideration was given to English, mathematics, science, history, French and PSHE. In these subjects, inspectors met with curriculum leaders and staff, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and scrutinised curriculum plans.

Inspection team

Alun Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gwen Onyon

Ofsted Inspector

Russell Hinton

Ofsted Inspector

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