

Inspection of Wicklea Academy

Wick Road, Brislington, Bristol BS4 4HR

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff make high demands of pupils at Wicklea Academy and have set out what they want pupils to learn. However, their plans and ambitions for pupils, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are not realised in many subjects. Pupils often find it difficult to connect what they have learned or are unable to recall key knowledge. As a result, they are not always as well prepared for the next stage in their learning as they should be.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They work well and play happily together. There is a supportive environment, founded on the school's 12 values, which guide pupils to be kind and considerate towards each other. Pupils feel safe. They say that bullying is rare and never tolerated. Pupils have confidence in staff and feel that they are listened to.

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

Leaders, including governors, are ambitious for pupils in terms of what they want pupils to achieve. They act with integrity and make decisions that they hope will inspire pupils. For example, leaders have adapted the curriculum to teach pupils about Bristol's historic connections to the slave trade. However, despite these good intentions, curriculum plans are not well sequenced or designed to enable pupils to acquire deep and fluent knowledge. As a result, too many pupils struggle to learn well in individual subjects or when trying to apply their knowledge across the curriculum.

Some pupils find learning even more difficult, including those with SEND, or others who need to catch up. For example, pupils who still need to know the phonics code to be able to read are not supported well enough. The phonics programme is not fit for purpose. Phonics books do not match pupils' knowledge. This is compounded when staff introduce misconceptions, which can lead to confusion, including how letters and sounds are presented, and pronounced. As a result, some pupils find it difficult to catch up, or to get off to a 'flying start' when they arrive. However, older pupils enjoy reading. They like studying different genres and books. This helps them when they come to write. Pupils are eagerly awaiting the completion of the new library.

Leaders have not ensured that staff have the right knowledge to teach the curriculum to a high standard. As a result, in some subjects, such as history, computing and mathematics, teachers are unable to take pupils on to the next stage of their learning effectively. Some poorly taught sequences introduce misconceptions which cause problems for pupils. For example, weak teaching of place value in mathematics and incorrect spelling of key words and vocabulary in lessons are barriers to pupils' learning.

Teachers check to find out what pupils know and understand in different subjects. They do this in different ways, such as through quizzes and tasks, when new study units are introduced. However, teachers do not consistently use assessment information well, either to adapt the curriculum or to match work closely to the needs of pupils, including those with SEND. As a result, gaps or weaknesses in pupils' knowledge are not identified and resolved quickly. Assessment is not consistently well matched to the demands of the curriculum. However, in a few subjects, such as personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, pupils are able to build on prior knowledge to make progress and enjoy their lessons.

Leaders and staff promote a strong culture of mutual care and respect. As a result, pupils feel valued and are cherished. Pupils know right from wrong. They are keen to help each other and follow the school rules well. This has helped to see the school through the challenges of the pandemic. Pupils are proud of the school and enjoy the various clubs and activities on offer, including residential and sports clubs, which are due to resume shortly. Pupils like having different jobs, such as being school councillors or assembly monitors, to assist with the smooth, daily running of the school.

Leaders, including governors, demand that Wicklea Academy is a welcoming and tolerant place. Pupils and staff share a common understanding to make this an inclusive school. Pupils 'live and breathe' the values so that, whether at work or play, pupils are mindful of others. This helps to promote strong social, moral and cultural development. Pupils also benefit from a well-coordinated pastoral team. They provide effective nurture and care, whenever pupils need it.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, have well-established systems to protect pupils. These include appropriate staff recruitment checks and child protection training. As a result, staff are vigilant and curious. They understand what they must do and use the agreed systems to raise any concerns promptly. Leaders respond quickly and are tenacious in working with external agencies, to keep pupils safe.

Leaders promote safeguarding well and are not complacent. Pupils say that they feel safe. They have a clear understanding of how to keep safe in different situations, including when using technology.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not designed or sequenced well enough. This leads to a lack of fluency in pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum builds

pupils' knowledge coherently, in different subjects as well as between them, and includes a high-quality early reading and phonics programme.

- Teachers sometimes lack the subject knowledge or expertise to implement the ambitions of the curriculum. As a result, pupils learn misconceptions or become confused. Leaders should ensure that staff training and professional development fulfils the range of teachers' needs to be able to deliver the ambitious curriculum.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well enough, including for pupils with SEND. Assessments do not consistently help pupils to gain the knowledge or understanding they need to be ready for the next stage of their education. Leaders should ensure that assessment information is accurate and used with precision, to help pupils progress well in all subjects.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	141351
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	10200955
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Bowden
Headteacher	Matthew Morgan
Website	www.wickleaacademy.com
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Wicklea Academy is a junior school located in Bristol.
- The school is part of the Waycroft Multi-Academy Trust, comprising of three local primary schools.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and computing.
- For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at individual plans for pupils with SEND to see how these are being implemented.

- Inspectors also looked at PSHE education and spoke with leaders and pupils about this subject.
- An inspector looked at the single central register and checked the school's systems for monitoring and reporting safeguarding concerns. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and one of the deputy safeguarding leads, who is also the family support worker.
- An inspector also met with the special educational needs coordinator to help evaluate SEND provision and practice in the school.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff and met with groups of pupils to find out what it is like to be a pupil, or to work, in this school.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors and trustees, and the executive headteacher. The lead inspector reviewed key documentation, including the academy improvement plan and sampled records of governors' visits to the school.
- The lead inspector checked all survey responses, including those from staff and parents. This included taking into account the 71 responses to Ofsted's free-text service.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lydia Pride	Her Majesty's Inspector
Iain Freeland	Her Majesty's Inspector

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