

# Inspection of Tile Cross Academy

Gressel Lane, Tile Cross, Birmingham, West Midlands B33 9UF

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Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act

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

This is an improving school. The headteacher has created a supportive culture where every pupil is welcome and all staff want pupils to achieve well. Staff are proud to work at the school and are committed to the pupils that are part of the school community. They form a united team, determined to continue to improve outcomes for pupils.

Relationships are respectful throughout the school. Pupils and staff spoke about the care taken over their well-being during the pandemic and return to work. Staff have used an anxiety thermometer to help pupils talk about their feelings. This has ensured that the school is a calm place after such a lot of uncertainty.

Many pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare. They know that staff will support them with any worries they have, and they feel safe in school. They are polite and friendly and keen to help new pupils.

In most subjects, pupils' learning is organised well. However, there are a few subjects where this is not the case. Leaders have already identified what needs to change. They have appointed new subject leaders and created plans to make these changes happen.

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

The headteacher and senior leaders provide honest and principled leadership. All leaders understand their role and how it contributes to the overall vision for the school. However, some leaders have not analysed the information they have about how the school is doing well enough. This means that their understanding of what to do next is not as precise as it should be.

Leaders have introduced an ambitious curriculum with new ideas to support its delivery. Teachers use 'smart starts' to help pupils recall what they have learned before. They also build in opportunities for pupils to practise new content and skills. However, some variability remains. In some subjects, like history and mathematics, the curriculum does not enable pupils' knowledge and skills to build well enough year on year.

The school quickly identifies pupils who join the school with particularly weak literacy skills. This group includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or those who speak English as an additional language. Staff ensure the right additional support is in place. Teachers have useful information to help plan the right kind of lessons to support these pupils. However, not all teachers use this information effectively or adapt activities to help pupils achieve as well as they could.

Some pupils receive specific support to help improve their reading at 'Skills school'. These pupils have access to the full curriculum and support from a specialist primary

teacher. This works quickly for some pupils and they can access the curriculum alongside their peers. However, for others, these skills do not become normal practice. As a result, accessing their work in other subjects remains difficult.

Pupils are interested in their learning and keen to take part in lessons. They behave well in class and are polite to teachers and other pupils. They are calm as they move around the building and proud of their school.

'Character development' features prominently in school life. Pupils learn about important themes such as gang culture from external speakers who visit the school. Pupils learn about how to be safe in our society through personal development programmes. They also learn how to develop healthy relationships. Careers information ensures that pupils know about the opportunities they have when they leave the school at the end of Year 11.

There are many opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school community. For example, 'Votes for Schools' enables pupils' voice to be heard and acted upon by leaders. There are many activities that pupils attend, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the Sea Cadets Corps. Many pupils also use the fitness facilities on the school site as part of a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

The trust has undergone many changes since March 2021, including a new chair of trustees. Several new trustees with specialist skills have been recruited. These members are already making a difference. A review of systems has been conducted and new structures have been introduced. As a result, leaders are now better supported and challenged.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a well-trained and dedicated safeguarding team. Staff benefit from regular and high-quality training. This ensures that staff are vigilant about any signs that pupils may need extra help. The school keeps secure and detailed safeguarding records which are regularly reviewed.

Leaders are knowledgeable about pupils and the local area. They ensure that pupils get the support that they need from other agencies.

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

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

- Leaders do not evaluate regularly enough information they collect about the school. As a result, future actions are not as timely or precise as they could be. Leaders must ensure that this aspect of their work becomes routine so that their

actions are timely and trustees can use this information to hold them to account fully for the quality of education.

- Pupils' experience of the curriculum is variable where curriculum plans are less well embedded. Newly appointed subject leaders have identified the right things to change but have not yet had time to put these plans in place. Leaders should ensure subject leaders new to post have suitable training and time to monitor and evaluate plans created to increase their impact on pupils' learning.
- Pupils who join the school with particularly weak literacy skills, with SEND, or where they speak English as an additional language do not always learn well in classrooms. This is because the curriculum is not suitably adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. Some teachers do not use the information they receive about these pupils well enough, for example about ways to structure their learning. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is carefully planned and suitably adapted for all pupils to enable them to achieve well.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144306
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10201067
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	601
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Graham Parker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Marano
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://tilecross.academy/">https://tilecross.academy/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school joined Washwood Heath Multi-Academy Trust on 1 May 2017.
- The school uses three alternative providers. These are all registered and in Birmingham.

## 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 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, two deputy headteachers, two assistant headteachers, senior strategic leaders, as well as subject leaders and teachers. They met with the acting chief executive officer and five members of the trust board.

- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and their attitudes to, and opinions about, school. Inspectors observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised several documents, including those related to safeguarding and child protection. They checked that the single central record contained all required information.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors paid particular attention to English, mathematics, history, physical education and art. In these subjects, inspectors met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Lois Kelly, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Sutton	Ofsted Inspector

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