

# Inspection of The Nuneaton Academy

Radnor Drive, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV10 7PD

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Inspection dates: 22 and 23 September 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

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

Pupils do not learn the curriculum well enough. Too often they do not fully understand what they have been taught. Leaders want pupils to learn the curriculum well. This is yet to happen effectively.

Leaders are ambitious for the school and the community it serves. Pupils develop the personal skills and knowledge they need to be successful. They learn how to stay safe, look after their own well-being and be respectful. They are well prepared to make informed decisions about their future.

Pupils reported that bullying in school is infrequent. They say that when it does occur, staff deal with it appropriately. Pupils report that staff do not tolerate inappropriate language, such as homophobic language, if they hear it.

Most lessons are calm and orderly. Pupils behave in lessons and listen respectfully to staff and to each other. Staff and pupils understand the systems for dealing with poor behaviour. These have helped to improve behaviour. However, these systems can mean pupils miss out on lesson time and they do not routinely catch up on missed learning.

Pupils feel safe in school. Pupils told inspectors that during social times, others generally behave well, although there are some instances of poor behaviour. Many pupils attend the wide range of enrichment activities on offer.

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

Staff do not implement the curriculum effectively. Leaders from across the multi-academy trust have considered what pupils should learn in subjects. Curriculum plans are sequenced well. However, there is a disconnect between these plans and what pupils experience in lessons. Teachers often move onto new learning before pupils have a secure understanding of what they have learned before. Pupils do not have the building blocks in place to grasp new learning. Teachers do not identify these gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge readily enough. This means that pupils are not learning the intended curriculum. Instead, they are often simply trying to remember a series of disconnected facts.

Leaders expect teachers to use a range of strategies to support pupils in lessons. However, in many instances, these hinder learning. For instance, pupils often resort to simply waiting for, and then copying down answers without understanding the context, vocabulary or meaning. This means that pupils are not learning how to study effectively or overcome stumbling blocks as they learn.

Leaders have plans in place to promote reading across the school, but these have yet to inspire pupils to read regularly or for pleasure. Staff read to pupils in tutor time, but pupils do not have the background knowledge to appreciate the texts and so do not see this as valuable.

Leaders expect pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn the same curriculum as other pupils. However, teachers do not consistently meet the needs of pupils with SEND in lessons so that they learn well. In too many instances, pupils with SEND are removed from lessons because of their behaviour. As a result, pupils miss out on important aspects of the curriculum and the support from an expert teacher. There is a similar negative pattern for disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils participate in a range of activities and clubs. Leaders track pupils' attendance at these and actively encourage other pupils to attend. Leaders rightly see the school as an integral part of the wider community. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum has been thoughtfully constructed. Pupils learn about the right things at the right time. For instance, pupils learn extensively about digital safety in Year 8 PSHE lessons. Pupils receive timely information about careers and further education. This means that they are well prepared for their next steps.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are trained well to know the possible signs that indicate a pupil is at risk. They know the systems for reporting these and the need to report any concern, no matter how small.

Leaders work with external agencies well to keep pupils safe. They are working hard to continue to strengthen links with families. Staff know pupils well. Pastoral systems support the safeguarding work of leaders and this is effective.

Leaders have recognised the potential risks to pupils in relation to online sexual abuse. They are raising awareness of this issue effectively with staff and pupils.

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

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

- Pupils are not learning the planned curriculum well enough. Their experiences in many lessons do not adequately enable them to develop their knowledge. Teachers do not sharply check that pupils have the fundamental building blocks in place. Hence, pupils' understanding is frequently shallow. This leaves them ill-equipped to cope with the demands of the curriculum. Leaders must urgently tackle this disconnection so that pupils remember the content they have been taught, linking new knowledge to what they already know.
- Teachers' professional development has lacked subject specificity. As a result, they are overly reliant on general pedagogical techniques that often lead to pupils trying to learn a series of disconnected facts. As a result, pupils' understanding is often disjointed. Leaders should make sure that teachers and staff are well trained to deliver the planned curriculum effectively.

- Leaders do not support disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND well enough. Leaders expect staff to adapt their classroom practice so that pupils with SEND learn the curriculum and disadvantaged pupils engage in lessons. This is not yet happening well. Too many disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are removed from lessons due to their behaviour, hence missing out on valuable teacher expertise. Leaders must make sure that teachers understand how to help these pupils so that they learn and behave well.
- Leaders have been too slow to prioritise reading. Detailed plans are now in place. However, many pupils do not enjoy reading and too few read for pleasure. Leaders must act to make sure that reading permeates all aspects of school life and that pupils develop a love of reading, so that they read widely and often.

## 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>	136158
<b>Local authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10201023
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	858
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Ian Dunn
<b>Principal</b>	Lara Hall
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://nuneatonacademy.midlandat.co.uk/">https://nuneatonacademy.midlandat.co.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 and 20 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- In September 2020, a new school principal was appointed.
- The Nuneaton Academy is one of four secondary schools that comprise The Midland Academies Trust.
- The school makes use of two registered alternative providers for a very small number of pupils.

## 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.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the principal and other leaders. They held discussions with teachers, members of the raising achievement board and the trustees of the multi-academy trust, including the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, art, geography, history, and modern foreign languages. For each of these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, carried out visits to lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at some of their work.
- Inspectors attended an assembly and visited tutor time.
- Inspectors met with members of staff individually and in groups, and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection. Inspectors also took account of responses to pupil and staff surveys, as well as Ofsted Parent View.
- An inspector spoke with staff at an alternative provision.
- Inspectors looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with the designated safeguarding lead.

### **Inspection team**

Ian Tustian, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Sal Yunus	Ofsted Inspector
Herminder Channa	Ofsted Inspector

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