

Inspection of The Grange Academy

Sparhawke, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 4PY

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 January 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their learning at The Grange Academy. They said that they find out about different things each day. Pupils appreciate the support and help they receive from their teachers. There are positive relationships between adults and pupils, which fosters a sense of care. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Leaders have high expectations that all pupils will achieve well. Pupils work hard in lessons and listen to what they need to do. They know that a few pupils find it hard to behave well all the time. Pupils said that adults in school are there to help everyone. Pupils do not consider that bullying is a problem. If it does occur, they are confident that adults would resolve any concerns.

Pupils know what it means to be a good friend. They learn about values such as kindness, respect and tolerance through their assemblies. They give recognition when 'catching' someone who is being kind.

Pupils think about what they want to do in the future. Many have high aspirations. Pupils enjoy taking on leadership roles in the school. They spoke of wanting to be doctors, vets and archaeologists when they are older.

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

Leaders want pupils to thrive and do well. They have considered the different needs of pupils when designing their curriculum. Leaders have thought about what pupils have learned before joining the school in Year 3. Leaders have constructed a curriculum so that pupils continue to deepen their knowledge and understanding systematically.

Most subjects across the school's curriculum are well designed and fully implemented. Mostly, the key knowledge pupils need to learn and remember for each year group is clear, and teachers understand what is to be taught and when. Where plans are well established, pupils are taught new knowledge and ideas well. In mathematics, for example, teachers confidently recap on useful learning, so that pupils can deepen their understanding and become proficient in applying their skills in number and calculations. In a very few subjects, such as history, leaders are continuing to make changes to their plans and are at the early stages of implementation. This means that pupils do not easily recall the important information leaders want them to remember.

Subject leaders lead their areas of responsibility well. They provide effective subject-specific training for staff. This results in teachers having a strong understanding of the things that they teach. Teachers check that pupils understand what they are being taught through 'pop' quizzes. Teaching plans are then adapted to ensure that any misunderstandings are dealt with quickly.

The teaching of reading is given a high priority. Every classroom is well supplied with a range of books for pupils to read. Leaders have thought about the books and authors

they want pupils to know. This ensures that pupils read a range of high-quality texts. Older pupils use these texts to help develop their reading skills, such as inference and retrieval. Pupils experience daily reading time. Pupils said that they enjoy hearing adults reading their favourite stories.

Leaders have a good understanding of pupils' starting points when they begin school in Year 3. For those who are at the early stages of reading, books are well matched to the sounds that they know. This helps to build their confidence. Pupils who struggle with learning to read are given the help and support that they need in order to keep up.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are understood well. Leaders provide appropriate training for staff. Suitable plans are in place that detail the support pupils receive in lessons. Staff ensure that pupils with SEND receive the full curriculum.

Leaders provide many opportunities to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about the needs of others because they carry out roles such as peer mediators. They learn how to work together, such as being responsible for the woodland as a woodland warrior. Leaders provide a range of clubs and activities to help to develop pupils' different interests and talents.

Governors and the trust know the school well. They make regular checks to understand how the school is improving. Alongside senior leaders, they have developed a collegiate spirit among staff. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding procedures are strong. Staff are clear about their responsibilities in relation to child protection. They keep a close eye on pupils and are alert to any concerns. Staff understand how to report any concerns. Leaders encourage them to report these, no matter how small the concern. Leaders' records show that they act without delay.

Leaders know their community well. They identify the types of risks to pupils' safety in the locality. Leaders ensure that pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, both in and out of school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are a few subjects where leaders have only recently refined their curriculum plans. They are not fully implemented throughout the school. This means that pupils are not able to remember the key knowledge that they need in

order to build their learning in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that all the important information pupils need to know is taught and implemented 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	144904
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10212037
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	204
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Patrick McAteer
Headteacher	Amanda Hopwood
Website	www.grange.herts.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became a sponsor-led academy in August 2017. The school is part of the Agora Learning Partnership Multi-Academy Trust.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2017.
- The school manages a school breakfast club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, reviewed curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited and

looked at pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to pupils in Year 3 reading to a member of staff.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the inclusion coordinator who is responsible for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils, including the single central record of recruitment checks. Inspectors also reviewed school records for behaviour, the school's evaluation of the work it does, the school's development plan, minutes of governors' meetings and recent peer review reports.
- An inspector held a meeting with the chair of the academy board of governors, trust members, including the chair and vice-chair, and the chief executive officer.
- An inspector met parents after school. They took into account 68 responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 67 free texts. Inspectors also considered a parental letter and three emails from parents.
- Inspectors reviewed 26 responses to the staff survey and 186 responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and staff, as well as observing pupils in and out of their classes.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kristian Hewitt

Her Majesty's Inspector

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