

# Inspection of Alcester Academy

Gerard Road, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 6QQ

---

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 January 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

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

Pupils are proud to attend Alcester Academy. Pupils in all year groups praise the support that they receive. They say that staff 'go the extra mile' for them. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong, and this helps to promote the positive culture of the school. Pupils and staff describe the school as 'like a family'. They treat each other with respect.

Behaviour in school is exemplary, both in and out of lessons. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens. They are confident that adults would take any concerns seriously should they arise. Pupils speak highly of the work of the learning support unit, where all pupils can go for advice and help.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils and pupils are keen to meet these expectations. They are proud of their achievements and ambitious for their futures. Staff give pupils an extensive range of opportunities through clubs such as rock academy, birdwatching, Latin and sports. Pupils value these opportunities and make the most of them. Teachers provide rich learning experiences in lessons. For example, in art, a project about conflict encourages pupils to think about global, national and local conflict and to apply this to their work in art.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum for pupils that is ambitious and inclusive. They have thought carefully about how the curriculum is sequenced and delivered. Leaders have identified gaps in learning that have arisen from the pandemic and have acted quickly to address these. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve highly. Reading is prioritised. Pupils who find reading difficult are taught well, and all pupils read daily. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They provide pupils with learning that challenges them. Pupils enjoy lessons and want to do well. Pupils choose their option subjects at the end of Year 8. As a result, some pupils do not study an arts subject or modern foreign language after the end of Year 8.

Pupils behave well. Lessons are rarely disrupted by unwanted behaviour. The school's pastoral support is a strength, and something that both pupils and parents really appreciate. Leaders use a range of information to monitor pupils' well-being and behaviour and use this to ensure that their actions are well-targeted. As a result, support is timely and effective. Pupils consistently demonstrate the school's values of kindness, respect, tolerance, honesty and integrity. They acknowledge diversity and support the well-being of their peers.

Pupils with SEND receive effective support. Their needs are identified quickly, and leaders make sure that 'pupil profiles' are used by all staff. This means that teaching matches the needs of all pupils. Teachers have received extensive training on the needs of pupils with SEND from specialist teachers.

There is a well-planned relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum. This is delivered through 'super learning days' where experts deliver sessions on important issues such as consent. Teachers support this learning in the pastoral programme. Leaders make sure that pupils learn about life in modern Britain. For example, pupils in Year 7 conduct a 'faith walk' around the community to visit places of worship for different religions.

Careers information, education, advice and guidance is well-considered. Pupils participate in Young Enterprise competitions, mock trials and science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) projects. Pupils can attend regular 'drop-in sessions' with local employers. Pupils have learned about jobs such as dog handler, costume designer and engineer as part of these visits.

Leaders know their community very well. They visit parents and work with local agencies. During the national lockdowns, the headteacher sent daily email updates to parents. Parents valued these. These relationships allow the school to support pupils well.

Staff are proud to be members of the school. They recognise the work of leaders to manage their workload and to support their well-being. Professional development is thoughtful and well-focused on the needs of teachers. Governance of the school is strong. Governors use their excellent knowledge of the school to set and monitor the strategic direction of the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that pupils know how to keep safe. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe online and about other risks. Pupils know where to get help for themselves and their peers if they need it. Leaders seek pupils' views about where they feel safe or less safe and act on this information, for example by changing the toilets to be used by single year groups.

Staff receive thorough training. The safeguarding team identifies safeguarding concerns that they have about individual pupils and works well with other agencies to secure the help that pupils need.

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

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

- Pupils opt at the end of Year 8 for the subjects they will study from Year 9 onwards. As a result, some pupils do not study a wide range of subjects in Year 9. Leaders should review their curriculum planning to ensure that all pupils are able to study a broad range of subjects commensurate with the national curriculum throughout Years 7 to 9.

## 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>	137172
<b>Local authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211997
<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>	641
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mike Dean
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Mellors
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.alcesteracademy.org.uk">http://www.alcesteracademy.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since September 2019.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## 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 in mathematics, English, geography, languages and music. 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 met with members of staff individually and in groups and spoke to pupils at various points during the inspection. Inspectors took account of responses to pupil and staff surveys, as well as Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at records relating to behaviour, bullying, 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**

Claire Price, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steve Byatt	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Considine	Ofsted Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022