

Inspection of George Dixon Academy

Portland Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, West Midlands B16 9GD

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The pupils of George Dixon Academy are proud of their school. They recognise the changes that have been made over the last year and say that this makes the school a more positive place to be. Pupils understand the new school values of 'grounded, determined and sincere' and can explain how this applies to their learning and their behaviours in school.

Leaders have introduced a new behaviour system. Pupils are clear about how they are expected to behave, and their behaviour in lessons and in social time is usually orderly. However, inconsistencies in behaviour remain. Some pupils think that bullying and discriminatory language are still a problem. Although pupils are confident that teachers do deal with these issues, pupils do not always report them. Leaders are aware of this and are addressing this.

Leaders have high expectations for the pupils at their school. They want all pupils 'to be the best they can be'. They have made sure that pupils and their families receive high quality pastoral support when they need it. However, the same attention has not been given to the curriculum. Some subjects are not planned well enough and pupils do not learn the important knowledge they need to be successful.

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

Leaders have not paid enough attention to the curriculum to ensure that it meets pupils' needs in the way that they intend it to. In some subjects, leaders have not thought carefully about the key knowledge that all pupils need to learn. This means that pupils do not always learn information in the right order and at the right time. This stops pupils from making useful links between what they learn. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are ambitious for their pupils. However, they do not always choose the best methods and resources to deliver their subject, and this hampers pupils' learning.

Leaders have placed a high importance on reading. They identify pupils who need support to become fluent readers and provide a catch-up programme for them. Although these pupils improve their reading, leaders do not check that these gains are maintained. Pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) receive intensive support to learn English. They are able to access all subjects quickly and continue to receive support from the EAL team.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. However, leaders do not always identify precisely enough what will best support these pupils' needs. Teachers do not use the information in pupil profiles consistently well. This means that pupils with SEND do not always make the progress that they should.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' personal development. Pupils participate in regular trips and visits to support their learning and aspirations. For example, all pupils in Year 9 have recently attended 'Big Bang' a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) event. There is a wide range of clubs available for pupils, including sports clubs, drama club, plant club, Korean club and tortoise club. Pupils know about these clubs but many say that they do not attend. Leaders do not monitor this well enough and so are unable to make sure that all pupils are able to develop their talents and interests. In the sixth form, students participate in a number of activities to support their next steps. Students are positive about these opportunities.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) for Years 7 to 11 is well planned and sequenced. However, delivery of this is too inconsistent and some pupils do not, therefore, learn the important things they need to know to keep themselves safe and to prepare for their futures. Students in the sixth form say that PSHE lessons do not focus on what they need to know. PSHE planning does not cover the issues that relate to their age group. Pupils benefit from a good careers education, and pupils learn about the training, education and employment routes available to them when they leave school. Students in the sixth form are supported to apply successfully for ambitious university courses.

The leadership team are new in post. They have begun to tackle what they have identified as the weaknesses of the school. However, in some significant areas of the school's work, such as the curriculum, these changes have not been addressed quickly enough. Governance has been too focused on the management of the trust, and governors have not paid sufficient attention to the quality of education and the experiences of pupils in the school. This has meant that governors do not have a clear idea about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and cannot provide the right support for leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding leaders are experienced and well-qualified. They have extensive knowledge of the wider risks that pupils face and make sure that all staff know how to spot indicators of harm. Staff record their concerns and these are acted on by leaders. Leaders hold fortnightly multi-disciplinary meetings in the school and use a wide range of information to provide early support for pupils and their families where it is needed. Leaders make appropriate referrals to children's services and follow these up to make sure that pupils get the help that they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not identified the important knowledge that pupils need to know in all subjects. This means that in some subjects, the curriculum is not sequenced

well enough to make sure that pupils build on their learning over time. This prevents pupils from developing a coherent understanding in some subjects. Leaders should make sure that all subjects have identified the knowledge that pupils need and plan the curriculums so that pupils can know more and remember more in all subjects.

- Delivery of the curriculum is too variable. Teachers do not always present information clearly enough or select the most appropriate methods and resources to ensure that all pupils are able to learn and remember the information that they need. This means that sometimes misconceptions occur and are not addressed, or that gaps in pupils' knowledge prevent them from being able to develop a deep understanding of the subjects they are learning. Leaders should ensure that all teachers are able to present important information clearly so that pupils can build on their knowledge over time.
- Many of the school's leaders are new to their roles and do not yet have a full understanding of how to implement their responsibilities. This means that sometimes they do not identify the actions that will make the biggest difference. Leaders should make sure that the policies and practices of the school support all leaders in developing their roles and responsibilities effectively.
- Governors have not been sufficiently focused on the quality of education or the experiences of pupils in the school. This means that they have not identified some important weaknesses of the school's work, nor provided support for leaders in tackling these weaknesses. Governors should make sure that they understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and take appropriate steps to tackle weaknesses in the school.

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	138695
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10227957
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1008
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	93
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sir Robert Dowling
Headteacher	Tutvinder Mann
Website	www.georgedixonacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	21 – 22 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The acting headteacher took up post in September 2021. The previous headteacher left the school in December 2021.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school is an academy trust.
- The school meets 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, including curriculum and pastoral leaders.
- Inspectors held discussions with teachers and representatives of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, and geography. For each of these subjects, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, 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
Natasha Rancins	Ofsted Inspector
Lois Kelly	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Clarkson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector

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