

Inspection of Gosforth Academy

Knightsbridge, Great North Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear
NE3 2JH

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 June 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Gosforth Academy is a calm, orderly and purposeful learning environment where pupils feel safe. Pupils treat one another with respect. Staff build positive relationships with pupils. Leaders have developed a culture of high expectation. A large majority of pupils follow academic routes. Pupils work hard and achieve well.

Leaders and staff are ambitious for pupils to do well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most pupils demonstrate that they have gained a detailed knowledge of the curriculum. Pupils talk positively about the opportunities open to them. These opportunities are particularly strong in sixth form, where the routes into university are well established. Pupils benefit from high-quality careers provision.

Pupils value their learning. Staff apply the behaviour policy fairly and consistently. A minority of pupils told inspectors that bullying happens and is not always dealt with effectively by staff.

The school has strong links with local charities, including the Newcastle United Foundation, which provides opportunities for pupils throughout the school. The school takes an active role in supporting the learning of the Gypsy Romany Traveller community at the Hoppings School. Students in the sixth form have access to excellent opportunities for enrichment. For example, the school has a strong link with Newcastle Falcons Rugby Club. Students are very positive about the space they have in school and they frequently use the designated library for silent study.

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

Leaders are passionate about the school and the area that they serve. They work hard to deliver positive outcomes for pupils. They have created a curriculum that takes into account the starting points of pupils who join from middle schools. Leaders check how well the curriculum is working. However, they do not act upon what they learn through these checks with consistent effect.

The curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced. It is designed to help pupils build their knowledge over time. Staff work in learning communities to effectively plan the order in which topics are taught. This is helping teachers to deliver a challenging and enjoyable curriculum.

In most subjects, teachers check learning to help pupils to improve their understanding. For example, in mathematics, teachers use questions well to check pupils' learning and adapt their teaching accordingly. However, variability exists in the way that teachers use assessment to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. For example, topic tests are not used deftly enough to help pupils improve. Examination

questions are sometimes used before pupils have fully explored topics. This means that pupils' deeper understanding is not assessed.

Support for pupils with higher levels of SEND is very effective. This is more variable for pupils accessing lower levels of support. Strategies to help pupils are not communicated with sufficient clarity to all staff. This limits progress for some pupils with SEND. The new special educational needs coordinator is mindful of what needs to be done. She has clear plans for improvement in place. It is too early to assess their impact.

The character development curriculum is designed to support pupils with their personal development. It helps to build a strong culture of respect. The personal, social and health programme is well planned and delivered. It helps to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. There are significant opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities. For example, pupils are involved in activities with local rugby, basketball and squash clubs. They benefit from an extensive range of performance opportunities and residential experiences.

Leaders have developed a strong programme of support to help pupils decide on the next steps in their education, employment and training. This includes extensive access to university information and support for UCAS applications. The work to help pupils get on to appropriate courses is strong. A small number of sixth-form students are not always given enough information about vocational opportunities.

Staff say that leaders take account of their workload and well-being. Despite this, assessment demands sometimes create pressure on them. While many parents value information about their child's progress, they also say that the school does not communicate with them as well as they would like.

Those responsible for local governance have a strong programme of link visits to check upon the progress leaders are making. However, multi-academy trust (MAT) leaders do not have a clear enough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a result, they sometimes do not challenge leaders in sufficiently focused ways.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have effective systems in place to keep pupils safe. As a result, the culture of safeguarding is strong.

Leaders provide staff with safeguarding training to help them to identify pupils who may be at risk. Staff know the safeguarding risks in the local area and are quick to pass on concerns about pupils who are at risk. Records are kept of leaders' actions, so that they are able to track actions to keep pupils safe.

Those responsible for governance are well informed and have a vigilance around safeguarding. They hold leaders to account in an effective manner.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders, including the MAT executive team, are not sufficiently responsive to what they learn from their checks on the school's work. This means that adaptations to teaching and the curriculum are not made promptly enough. This slows down the pace of school improvement. Leaders at all levels need to act more purposefully to address emerging areas for improvement.
- Leaders do not consistently provide staff and parents with the information and guidance needed to support all pupils with SEND. This means that some pupils with SEND do not get the help they need. Leaders should make sure that the use of guidance information is improved so that staff are better able to help all pupils with SEND.
- Assessment is not used to consistent effect. On occasions, teachers use examination-type assessment before pupils have fully explored topics. This means that teachers do not secure a clear picture of what pupils have understood. The overuse of this type of assessment also creates workload pressures for staff. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used more effectively to check what pupils have learned.

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	136352
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10228961
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	13 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1953
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	722
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chief executive of trust	Hugh Robinson
Principal	Preit Chahal
Website	www.ga.newcastle.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 May 2015, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Gosforth Academy converted to become an academy school in February 2012 when it joined The Gosforth Federated Academies Limited. Its predecessor school, Gosforth High School, was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005, when it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school has a small number of pupils who access alternative provision at Newcastle Bridges School.
- The principal has been in post since 2019.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to inform pupils in Year 8 to 13 about approved 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 had 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 spoke with the chief executive of the trust, the principal and senior leaders of the school. They also spoke with representatives of the local advisory group, including the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, science, languages, history, art and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with leaders with responsibility for reading.
- Inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for behaviour and reviewed records of behaviour and attendance.
- Meetings were held with leaders responsible for pupils with SEND. Inspectors also looked at support plans for pupils with SEND, including education, health and care plans.
- Meetings were held to discuss safeguarding arrangements. Inspectors scrutinised school records of the safeguarding checks on adults working in the school, including the single central record.
- Inspectors visited pupils during form time with their tutors.
- Inspectors looked at plans for the personal development curriculum and information on careers information and guidance.
- Meetings were held with the leader of sixth form to discuss curriculum plans. Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to students.
- Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils and spoke informally to pupils at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents, staff and pupils through surveys, including Ofsted's Parent View survey.

Inspection team

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