

# Inspection of a good school: Four Dwellings Academy

Dwellings Lane, Quinton, Birmingham B32 1RJ

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Inspection dates:

11 and 12 October 2022

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders' vision is for pupils to 'find your remarkable'. Teachers treat pupils as individuals. Pupils say they welcome this. Pupils appreciate the additional support they receive, such as additional English or mathematics sessions, attending external educational visits and being driven to sixth-form interviews. Pupils also have the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular activities such as steel pans, coding and app design and 'Bite Back 2030'. This supports pupils' personal development well.

Pupils say that 'behaviour is improving' and they feel safe. However, pupils also say that sometimes there is disruption to their learning. Some pupils use derogatory and inappropriate language. Pupils do not follow leaders' behaviour expectations consistently. Leaders deal with bullying when it happens and pupils say that they are confident that leaders take action quickly. Leaders teach pupils not to accept any bullying behaviour, but they are aware that pupils do not always report bullying or other unacceptable behaviour.

Leaders have developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Pupils study a range of subjects, including creative and performance subjects. Leaders' high expectations and effective curriculum enable pupils to achieve well and be prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

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

In some subjects, leaders know precisely how to present key knowledge to help pupils learn, so pupils can remember the key knowledge and use it in their work. For example, in mathematics, pupils explained how the work they did on equations in Year 9 is helping them to understand their work in Year 11. In modern foreign languages, pupils' learning over time has successfully developed their understanding of phonics, grammar and vocabulary. However, not all teachers are presenting key knowledge clearly enough.

Where this key knowledge is not clear, pupils do not understand what they should know. This leads to some pupils losing interest in their learning and disrupting the learning of others.

Leaders have introduced 'do now' tasks at the start of lessons so teachers can check what pupils know. Not all teachers use them in the same way. Some pupils do not complete these tasks when asked, and because some teachers do not check that pupils complete this work, pupils have gaps in their learning. This means that some pupils are not learning the key knowledge they need to make progress.

Leaders quickly identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with the additional support they need. 'Pupil profile' sheets set out this support and are shared with teachers. Some pupils have support through a reading programme. This programme enables pupils to catch up. Leaders ensure that this additional support minimises the amount of time pupils miss from their learning in other subjects.

Leaders are in the process of establishing a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills. Pupils are beginning to be encouraged to read often, including during tutor sessions and in the library. All tutor groups read age-appropriate texts which relate to the personal, social, economic and health (PSHE) education programme. The texts cover social themes such as isolation and loneliness and identity. Teachers model reading by highlighting key thematic words. Teachers also discuss pupils' views on these themes. This is beginning to help promote pupils' wider reading.

PSHE is well planned and sequenced. A small number of specialist staff teach PSHE. This ensures that there is consistent teaching, especially regarding sensitive topics. Leaders have also increased the number of PSHE sessions, which enables pupils to discuss the topics in more detail. Pupils engage enthusiastically with this programme.

Leaders prioritise personal development. There is a range of extra-curricular activities that pupils can take part in. Pupils sent positive letters to teachers as a result of the 'random acts of kindness' club. This club has developed into 'well-being ambassadors'. The well-being ambassadors promote support for their peers' emotional health and well-being through displays and presentations.

Recent appointments to the leadership team, including a new principal, have brought greater clarity around learning and behaviour expectations. However, these are not yet fully embedded. Those responsible for governance know what the school's strengths are and what needs to improve further.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding leaders are experienced and well qualified. They have extensive knowledge of the wider issues that pupils face within the school and the wider community. Training for all staff, including safer recruitment and spotting indicators of harm, is recorded and

evaluated. Staff record their concerns centrally and these are acted on by an extensive team of leaders. Weekly meetings take place which enable early support to be put in place for pupils and parents where needed. Leaders make appropriate referrals to children's services and follow these up to make sure the pupils get the help that they need.

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

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

- The quality of the delivery of the curriculum varies from subject to subject. Teachers do not always present information clearly enough to ensure that all pupils can learn the information they need. This means that pupils do not understand what they have to do, and some pupils do not engage in their learning, which can disrupt other pupils. Leaders should ensure that all teachers are able to present important information clearly so that pupils understand the key knowledge for each piece of work.
- Teachers do not consistently check that pupils understand what has been learned. This means that teachers do not identify and address pupils' gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that all teachers check pupils' understanding at regular points in their learning and adapt their teaching accordingly so that pupils can successfully build on their knowledge over time.
- Some pupils do not behave well enough during lessons and unstructured times. This disrupts the learning and social times of others. Some pupils are also reluctant to report inappropriate behaviour. Leaders should continue to raise expectations for behaviour throughout the school community to ensure that all pupils experience undisturbed learning. Leaders should also ensure that pupils are confident to report all instances of inappropriate behaviour to members of staff.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2017.

## **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.

## **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>	139047
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240306
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	589
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Hall
<b>Principal</b>	Claire Stoneman
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.fourwellingsacademy.org/">http://www.fourwellingsacademy.org/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 and 17 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The principal was appointed in September 2022.
- Leaders make use of three registered alternative provisions.
- The academy meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 11 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 and education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

- 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 focused on the following deep dives: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and music. Inspectors examined leaders' curriculum planning, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught. They also looked at other subjects to check how they are planned and taught.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of academy documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the academy’s curriculum and improvement planning. Inspectors also checked the academy website.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils’ behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chief executive officer, trustees, governors, the principal, senior leaders, lead professionals, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also considered Ofsted’s staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

### **Inspection team**

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Mark Howes

His Majesty’s Inspector

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