

# Inspection of Mount Grace School

Church Road, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1EZ

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Inspection dates: 2 and 3 November 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Sixth-form provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

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

Pupils have a variety of places they can go if they have a worry or concern, such as the 'pastoral hub' or 'oasis centre'. They know that staff will listen and try to help with any bullying issues. Most pupils feel happy and safe. A minority of pupils find it difficult to share their worries or concerns. Staff try to support these pupils, including offering a popular friendship group at lunchtimes, yet their worries still persist.

Pupils learn an ambitious curriculum, where they build up their knowledge over time. They are enthused by the practical activities they get to do in subjects like design and technology, and the whole school musical production.

Sometimes, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not get the support they need to understand what is being taught. This is because teachers do not check carefully enough what pupils have understood, before moving on.

Pupils generally learn in a disruption-free environment. They have increased confidence in the approach of the new headteacher, and feel that behaviour is improving. Despite this, some pupils still worry about behaviour in pockets of the school, both in and outside of lessons.

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

Leaders have ensured that teachers have been involved in the design of the curriculum. As a result, in all subjects, teachers have carefully planned the key knowledge they want pupils to learn. Leaders have also ensured that the curriculum offered is sufficiently broad and balanced. This includes a suitable balance of vocational and academic options in the sixth form.

Teachers have mixed levels of experience. Some use their experience to deliver the planned curriculum effectively. However, leaders have not ensured that all staff have had the support they need to deliver the curriculum consistently well. This is because quality assurance processes have not been precise enough. Consequently, historically, pupils do not achieve well enough at GCSE.

Some teachers do not use assessment effectively to check what pupils know. This means that pupils' misconceptions, or where pupils need further support, are not identified effectively enough. This leads some pupils to develop gaps in their knowledge and understanding. This is not the case in the sixth form, where experienced teachers use assessment effectively to check what students know and adapt teaching according to need. Students in the sixth form achieve well.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND effectively but have not ensured all teachers consistently follow the identified support strategies well enough. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not get a consistently good level of support. This

is not the case in the sixth form where the needs of students with SEND are consistently well met.

Leaders have implemented an effective whole-school focus on reading. This includes an appropriate progression of high-quality texts in the English curriculum and regular opportunities for pupils to participate in guided reading during form time. Those at the earlier stages of reading receive specific intervention support.

Leaders have ensured that behaviour does not generally disrupt learning. This includes the appropriate use of alternative provision to support need. Leaders have worked to be visible and ensure any incidences of poor behaviour are followed up effectively. In some lessons, ineffective delivery of the curriculum results in lower standards of behaviour. As a result, a minority of pupils still have worries about behaviour and feel further improvement is needed. Despite leaders' actions, persistent absence remains high, as does the level of suspensions. Consequently, too many pupils miss out on learning more regularly than they should. In the sixth form, standards of behaviour are consistently good.

Pupils have access to a wide variety of clubs and opportunities, including participating in musical and sporting activities and going on trips. Pupils joining the school are made to feel comfortable, especially through the summer school that is on offer.

Leaders have ensured the school has an appropriate programme for personal, social and health education. Pupils are taught about relationships and fundamental British values. Careers education is well developed in the sixth form. Sixth-form students receive appropriate advice and guidance. In the rest of the school, careers education is at the earlier stages of development.

Governors have not ensured that parents have been properly consulted on relationships and sex education (RSE) or that an up-to-date policy is in place. As a result, governors' monitoring has not ensured that the school has fulfilled one of its statutory duties. Governors recognise that additional leadership capacity is needed and are currently seeking to provide this by joining a multi-academy trust. Leaders have ensured that they have taken account of staff's workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff have had appropriate training to be able to identify need. This included bespoke training on sexual harassment and other topical issues. Pupils have assemblies on similar themes.

Safer recruitment processes are effective, and appropriate record-keeping is in place.

Leaders follow up on concerns appropriately and keep records of actions.

Safeguarding leaders are knowledgeable. They work with external agencies to secure support for families. Appropriate child protection policies are in place.

A small minority of pupils say they worry about feeling safe. Leaders have put in place a variety of different strategies to support pupils in addressing these worries.

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

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

- Leaders have not ensured that teachers use assessment consistently well to check what pupils know or can do. As a result, some pupils struggle with learning during lessons and do not get the support they need from teachers to make progress. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers use assessment effectively to check what pupils know, and then provide the appropriate support where there are gaps in pupils' understanding or knowledge.
- Leaders have ensured that the needs of pupils with SEND are effectively identified. Where strategies have been identified to support these needs, leaders have not ensured that teachers adopt these consistently well in lessons. As a result, pupils with SEND get an inconsistent level of support from teachers. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers consistently adopt the identified strategies to support pupils with SEND.
- Governors have not ensured that a consultation on the school's RSE policy has taken place or that an up-to-date policy is in place. As a result, the school has not met one of its statutory duties. Governors need to ensure that robust quality assurance processes are in place so all statutory duties are met.

## **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>	137224
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241117
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	526
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	76
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Colin Daniel
<b>Headteacher</b>	Aytac Ali
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.mountgrace.org.uk/">www.mountgrace.org.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 and 27 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The new headteacher took up his post in April 2022.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 the following subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, geography and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum 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 conducted meetings with members of the governing body and leaders of provision for citizenship, SEND, behaviour and attendance, the sixth form, safeguarding and personal development.
- Inspectors observed breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors also visited form time and after-school time.
- Inspectors visited other subjects and met with leaders in science.
- Inspectors explored the school's safeguarding culture by viewing safeguarding records and procedures, meeting with a range of pupils and staff and talking to safeguarding leaders.
- Inspectors considered the 101 responses and 63 free-text responses made by parents to the questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered 29 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 101 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

James Chester, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Georgina Atkinson

Ofsted Inspector

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