

Inspection of Great Wyrley Academy

Hall Lane, Great Wyrley, Walsall, West Midlands WS6 6LQ

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2023

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?

This is a rapidly improving school. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, are happy here. They build strong, positive relationships with their peers and their teachers. Pupils feel comfortable turning to staff for support if it is needed. Because of this, pupils feel safe at school and are confident that when bullying happens, staff will deal with it swiftly and effectively.

Pupils, parents and staff told inspectors that behaviour at the school is much improved in recent years. Leaders have put a great deal of thought and effort into making this happen. In most lessons, pupils focus on their learning and strive to pursue 'excellence'. An increasing number of pupils embody the 'Wyrley Way' in all that they do. Teachers are quick to challenge pupils when they fail to meet the high expectations leaders have of them, and support them when necessary.

The headteacher, supported by leaders from across the multi-academy trust, has galvanised the staff team. They share her ambitious vision for pupils and the community. Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that develops pupils academically as well as increasing their understanding of their social and moral responsibility. For example, pupils in the eco-sustainability group took part in a youth 'COP' event to identify ways the school can combat climate change.

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

The new headteacher, supported by the senior leadership team, is overseeing significant transformation at the school. Leaders are beginning to create a culture of excellence. Comprehensive support from the multi-academy trust is helping to ensure this improvement is sustainable.

Staff development is extensive. Many staff are experts in their subject; they have a deep understanding of how pupils learn. Consequently, across all subjects, leaders have developed a curriculum after careful consideration of the things that pupils need to know to be successful. This is helping pupils to remember the things they should. For example, in modern foreign languages, younger pupils are developing a sound knowledge of the grammatical rules of French, and they speak with growing confidence and fluency in French. As this knowledge develops, pupils are beginning to develop a passion for the subject. Currently, though, not enough pupils study a modern foreign language at key stage 4. Leaders are taking appropriate steps to address this.

In some lessons, including in the sixth form, teachers use assessment well to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Where this happens, teachers quickly intervene, and adapt their teaching to make sure that all pupils have understood everything they ought to. This stops pupils from falling behind. However, in other lessons, teachers' use of assessment is less strong. Some teachers do not always identify

when pupils have failed to understand something they have been taught. As a result, misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge persist. This hinders learning.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The newly appointed special educational needs coordinator (SENDCo) has worked effectively and at pace to ensure that staff have all the information they need to support these pupils. Most staff make good use of this. However, on occasion, the work that teachers give to pupils with SEND is not well matched to their needs. When this happens, pupils struggle to make sense of their classwork and fall behind their peers. Sixth-form students with SEND are well supported.

Leaders are developing a culture of reading at the school. Pupils read a wide range of books that have been carefully curated by leaders. For example, younger pupils read both 'Of Mice and Men' and 'Long Way Down'. These texts are also used to help pupils to gain a balanced view on important issues such as race and discrimination. Leaders' work to support those pupils who struggle to read is notable. Pupils with gaps in their phonics knowledge are quickly identified, and effective interventions are put in place to support these pupils. This work is helping these pupils to develop their ability and confidence to read.

Leaders' work to understand pupils' day-to-day experiences both in and out of school is impressive. As a result of this work, pupils feel empowered to share concerns about issues such as sexual harassment, race, and gender identity. Pupils are helping leaders to shape the education of other pupils in these vital issues.

Leaders have made sure that pupils, including those in the sixth form, receive helpful information about the world of work. Pupils can develop their interests outside of the classroom by taking part in a growing range of activities. Leaders are working to ensure that an increasing number of pupils benefit from these opportunities. Some pupils' attendance at, and punctuality to, school is not as good as it should be. Leaders are working hard to address this, but this work is not yet having the desired effect.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all staff have received the training they need to recognise pupils who are at risk of harm. Staff are vigilant to any changes in pupils' behaviour that may indicate a concern. When concerns are raised, leaders act swiftly. They make timely referrals to social services and provide support to pupils and families who need it.

Leaders work closely with external agencies such as the police to better understand the risks to pupils within the local area. They use this knowledge to adapt their curriculum planning to address any emerging needs as they arise. This is helping pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment well enough to identify misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge. This limits the progress that pupils make. Leaders should ensure that all teachers use assessment effectively to identify the things pupils have not remembered and adapt their teaching appropriately to make sure pupils remember them in future.
- In some lessons, teachers do not adapt their teaching well enough to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Consequently, some pupils do not receive work that is well matched to their needs, which hinders their learning. Leaders should ensure that all teachers make good use of the information they have about pupils with SEND and provide work that is well suited to the needs of these pupils.
- Some pupils do not attend school as often as they should, while others are frequently late to school. This means that these pupils are missing out on valuable learning time in school. Leaders should ensure that all the actions they take are carefully evaluated to ensure that all pupils, particularly those with SEND, attend often and are punctual.

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

Unique reference number	144988
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10256805
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	537
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	47
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anne Haigh
Headteacher	Kelly Moore
Website	greatwyrleyacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- 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.
- The school uses part-time alternative provision at one unregistered provider.
- This school is one of nine schools that comprise the Windsor Academy Trust.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the SENDCo. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff from across the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, French, geography and business enterprise. For each deep dive, 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 scrutinised a range of safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy, spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. The lead inspector spoke to the safeguarding leader about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents.
- Inspectors took account of parents' free-text comments and the responses on Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses to the pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Alexander Laney, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Guy Shears	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Godden	Ofsted Inspector

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