

Inspection of Greenacre Academy

157 Walderslade Road, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent ME5 0LP

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils feel safe in school and report that bullying is not common. However, the use of derogatory language is normalised among pupils because not all staff address its use effectively. Pupils do not commonly report when they hear disrespectful language, so leaders are unable to tackle the issue effectively. Staff also do not consistently ensure that pupils know and follow the school rules. Lessons are commonly disrupted by calling out or defiant behaviour because staff do not maintain high expectations. Consequently, many pupils find it difficult to learn well.

Expectations of what pupils will achieve are too low. When starting in Year 7, some pupils learn the 'Alternative Curriculum'. Here, pupils do not learn sufficiently ambitious knowledge and skills. They are not as well prepared for the future. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not met well enough in class. Consequently, these pupils are not making as much progress as they could.

Pupils receive helpful careers advice. They learn about many different industries and pathways they could take after school. There is a wide range of different clubs and activities on offer, which further develop pupils' interests and talents. However, leaders do not check that those who would benefit the most participate in these opportunities.

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

There have been a number of recent changes in the school's senior leadership team. This has been unsettling for the school community. The new senior leaders have not yet had the opportunity to develop their expertise to fully embed the much-needed improvements in behaviour, attendance and academic progress. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. However, this is not realised because trust and school leaders have not put in place or monitored the necessary improvement processes to address the areas of concern.

Trustees and governors also do not provide the effective challenge and support needed to make the required significant improvements. The multi-academy trust is reliant upon significant external help to support the school at this time. This is because they lack the capacity within their own leadership to address the weaknesses in the school. While school staff speak highly of the efforts of the new senior leaders, there is a recognition of the many challenges the school still faces. This has led to staff not having the confidence to challenge pupils' negative attitudes towards learning and each other.

In most subjects, leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils need in order to go on to learn more. This knowledge is ordered in a logical way to help pupils make connections between new and prior learning. Learning builds year on year and teachers check what pupils can remember. However, assessment and

subsequent feedback are not used consistently well in all subjects to help pupils understand how to improve. This hinders pupils' progress in many subjects.

The curriculum is not equally ambitious for all pupils. Those pupils who struggle to read well or have barriers to learning study the 'Alternative Curriculum'. Pupils study the same topics as their peers but not in sufficient depth. This means they do not gain the knowledge they need to achieve highly. Additionally, expectations of pupils in these classes are lower. Pupils with SEND are often placed in these classes alongside pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour. Teachers therefore are not able to provide the effective support each pupil needs to learn. This is having a significant impact on the progress of pupils in these classes.

Leaders are quick to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. They share detailed support plans with all staff. However, leaders do not check that teachers use these plans to adapt learning carefully. Leaders also do not commonly review plans to check if the support is helpful. Leaders know that a number of pupils are not fluent readers. Therefore, they ensure that the curriculum provides regular opportunities to practise reading. Pupils who need phonics support receive effective help.

Too many pupils, including students in the sixth form, do not attend school regularly enough. Leaders have not put in place effective processes to check which pupils need additional support to attend school. Often, when help is provided, it is ineffective in removing the barriers preventing pupils from coming to school. Consequently, these pupils miss out on learning the curriculum and on the experiences offered through the personal development programme.

Students in the sixth form speak highly of the range of vocational qualifications on offer. The offer is focused on apprenticeships and the world of work. However, a significant number of pupils study courses with less ambitious outcomes. While this is suitable for some students, it may limit the future options of others. Those students who need to retake English and mathematics achieve well.

The programme to promote pupils' personal development is well developed from Year 7 to Year 13. The careers programme helps pupils to consider different routes to employment and education post-16. The 'Skills for Life' curriculum teaches pupils about leadership and respect. While leaders promote tolerance and respect in assemblies and tutor time, teachers do not insist that pupils fully engage in learning. Therefore, not all pupils fully comprehend the implications of disrespectful behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide effective training to ensure that all staff know how to identify the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. They take swift action to provide support in school or seek additional help from external professionals if needed. Leaders are working tenaciously with other professionals in the community, such as the police, to ensure that the more vulnerable pupils are kept safe and are well supported.

Records to show what steps leaders take to check pupils are safe when not in school are not maintained clearly enough. This makes it difficult for leaders to have oversight of the support for pupils who are not in school. Leaders are working to address this.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Those responsible for governance have been too slow in establishing clear lines of accountability to tackle weakness in the school. Consequently, leaders' work to improve pupils' attendance, progress and behaviour has not been effective and has not resulted in signs of improvement. The multi-academy trust, trustees and the local governing body must work together to ensure that they embed their new systems of accountability to strategically monitor and improve school effectiveness.
- Leaders do not ensure that all staff manage poor behaviour effectively or consistently address pupils' use of derogatory language. Consequently, learning is disrupted. In addition, disrespectful behaviour has become normalised by pupils and they do not regularly report it. Leaders must ensure that all staff have the training and confidence they need to implement the behaviour policy consistently.
- The curriculum is not ambitious enough because expectations of some pupils, including pupils with SEND, are too low. Not all pupils learn the knowledge and skills that they need to be successful. Leaders must take action to ensure that there is a suitably ambitious curriculum in place for every pupil.
- Leaders do not make sure that pupils attend school well enough, particularly students in the sixth form. Therefore, many pupils do not benefit from the education that the school provides and are falling behind in their education. Leaders must ensure that they take swift action to address this and re-engage pupils back into education.

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	138046
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10281992
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	973
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	128
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tom Maddison
Headteacher	Shelly Bridger
Website	www.sflt.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Skills for Life Academies Trust.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers to provide education and support for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school has a joint sixth form with Walderslade Girls' School. This school is also part of the Skills for Life Academies Trust.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- 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.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and physical education. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at planning in the modern foreign languages curriculum.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector spoke with trustees, including the chair of trustees, the interim chief executive officer and representatives from the local governing body, including the chair.
- Inspectors considered the 139 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including additional free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys and gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors viewed the school's website and policies, met with the designated safeguarding lead, spoke with pupils and staff, checked school records of safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school and spoke with trustees and the members of the governing board.
- Inspectors reviewed records of behaviour, including records of suspensions and the use of reduced school timetables. Inspectors reviewed attendance records, including a discussion of leaders' actions when pupils do not attend school well.

Inspection team

Michelle Lower, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Martin Smith	His Majesty's Inspector
James Stuart	His Majesty's Inspector
Laura James	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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