

Inspection of Erdington Academy

Kingsbury Road, Erdington, Birmingham, West Midlands B24 8RE

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement
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What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. They ensure that the values of excellence, dedication, tradition, integrity and ambition are central to the school's culture. They have developed a calm and orderly environment, where pupils feel safe. Pupils have access to a broad curriculum, which is ambitious for all, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy their learning. For example, in Year 7, they enjoy learning about a wide variety of myths and legends relating to the different cultures of the school.

Pupils are usually respectful to one another and staff. Staff take incidents of bullying seriously. Pupils say bullying is rare. Leaders challenge discriminatory and derogatory language. Pupils say that they very rarely hear racist language, but some do hear homophobic language. Leaders are working together with pupils to eradicate this. Pupil 'anti-bullying ambassadors' are trained to support pupils in feeling safe.

Pupils value 'The Erdington Edge Programme', which includes extra-curricular activities and educational visits. They are enthusiastic about the many clubs offered, such as journalism, sports, gardening, guitar and games clubs. As part of the programme, there are many opportunities for pupil leadership, and they are proud of the positive contribution they make to the community.

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

Leaders have worked quickly to improve the quality of education across the school. They have instilled high ambition, which is shared by staff. This ambition is reflected in the curriculum offer and in the rising pupil numbers studying the English Baccalaureate qualification.

Leaders have developed an exciting and ambitious curriculum for all pupils. They have thought hard about what they want pupils to learn and when. It is well sequenced so that new learning builds on what pupils can already do, including when pupils arrive in Year 7. This means that pupils acquire knowledge over time.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and consider the approaches they use to ensure pupils progress well. This is particularly strong in subjects such as English. However, at times, teachers in some other subjects do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to discuss their learning. This means that some pupils cannot talk confidently about what they know and understand. This also means that teachers are not able to pick up and address misconceptions swiftly during lessons.

Pupils with SEND follow the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Staff are well trained in identifying additional needs and assessing these needs. Consequently, pupils receive high-quality support from teachers and support staff, who know the pupils well. Appropriate interventions support pupils who need additional help.

Leaders have prioritised reading, encouraging pupils to become confident and fluent readers. Staff are trained to support pupils who find reading difficult. This has rapidly improved pupils' confidence in reading in key stage 3.

The school's personal development programme is of a high quality. Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum, called 'The Edge'. This takes into account specific challenges that might be faced by pupils, such as gang culture. Pupils learn in detail about beliefs different to their own and the importance of tolerance and respect and how to keep themselves safe. At times, pupils do sometimes hear some derogatory language, such as homophobic words. To address this, leaders have adapted the curriculum to provide more opportunities for pupils to learn to challenge derogatory language. However, leaders agree that there is more to be done to address this.

The school's careers programme is comprehensive. It is well planned, giving pupils access to high-quality information about careers. Careers fairs, apprenticeship days and visitors to school enrich pupils' understanding of potential career pathways. This helps them to make informed choices about their potential next steps.

Leaders have introduced clear behaviour systems, using a 'playbook' to generate a shared understanding among staff, pupils and parents. Staff value the training and consistency. As a result, behaviour and punctuality are demonstrably improving. A comment from one pupil typifies the improvement: 'There was bullying a couple of years ago, but it is so much better now. It is always dealt with.'

Those responsible for governance know the school well. They provide strong challenge and support to school leaders. They ensure that workload and well-being are monitored across the school, including that of the headteacher. The school is very well supported by trust leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders work tenaciously to support pupils' safety and well-being. Staff receive regular training, including on local issues or risks to individual pupils. This means they are well trained to spot if a pupil is at risk of harm or exploitation. Lessons support pupils to consider what they need to do to be safe in their local community. For example, pupils learn about issues pertaining to their home city, Birmingham, such as drug and alcohol abuse and knife crime.

Safeguarding records are detailed and thorough. However, the school currently operates two systems for recording concerns. This makes it difficult for leaders to have a single, clear overview of all safeguarding concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Despite leaders' continued efforts to create a positive environment, they have not ensured that all pupils understand that discriminatory language is not tolerated in the school community. As a result, some pupils sometimes use language that undermines the inclusive culture of the school. Leaders should take effective action to eradicate discriminatory language.
- Leaders have not ensured that all safeguarding records are kept in a way that allows leaders to make checks on the actions that are being taken as readily as they might. As a result, while leaders are taking effective action, they cannot quickly see the bigger picture for each pupil. Leaders should ensure that the recording of safeguarding concerns is coherent so that they can quickly check actions and be confident that all pupils are getting the help that they need.
- Leaders have not ensured that all teachers promote discussions effectively among pupils about what they are learning so that teachers can readily identify misconceptions. This also means that some pupils cannot talk readily to teachers and each other about their new learning. Leaders should ensure that all teachers give pupils appropriate opportunities to articulate and discuss new learning in order to make links with earlier learning and to enable teachers to swiftly identify misconceptions.

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	143413
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10256935
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	985
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andy Best
Principal	Simon Mallett
Website	www.erdingtonacademy.bham.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	8 and 9 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school currently uses five registered alternative providers.
- 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 education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 met with the principal, other senior leaders and teaching staff. The lead inspector also met with the CEO of Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust and other trust leaders. Inspectors held a discussion with members of the trust board and local associate board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, geography, languages and art. 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 held meetings with school leaders about attendance, behaviour and careers information.
- Inspectors met with the school's special educational needs coordinator to check the systems that the school has in place to support pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, formally and informally, throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors met with leaders with overall responsibility for safeguarding and looked at school records. They also scrutinised the single central record.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Guy Shears, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Bailie	Ofsted Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Darren Bishop	Ofsted Inspector

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