

Inspection of a good school: Saltley Academy

Belchers Lane, Bordesley Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B9 5RX

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

Outcome

Saltley Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Saltley Academy are happy and determined to do their best. The way in which they conduct themselves reflects the tolerant and inclusive school which leaders have created.

Pupils behave well, almost without exception. As one leader said, 'We aim to educate well-rounded individuals who understand their rights and the rights of others.' Leaders have been successful in this. Pupils are confident that staff will quickly help them resolve any disputes that may arise, including bullying. Pupils say that there are members of staff they can talk to if they are worried about something, or if someone is being unkind. As a consequence, the school is a harmonious community.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is highly ambitious and sets high expectations for pupils. Some pupils do find it challenging to recall the key knowledge they need to succeed, but teachers are skilled at identifying and dealing with this. Pupils show resilience and determination in class. Leaders have focused on developing oracy, and this is enabling pupils to discuss their work with increasing confidence.

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

The curriculum at Saltley is broad and ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The EBacc is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Leaders stated that the published results reflect the significant challenges the school community faced during the pandemic. They are continuing to review the curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of their pupils.

Teachers have sound subject knowledge and present learning clearly. They cover the content set out in the curriculum plans, and extend pupils' knowledge by giving clear explanations. Teachers use a variety of forms of assessment to check pupils' understanding. They then adapt their teaching effectively to support pupils' learning. Leaders support pupils to choose GCSE courses which will enable them to be successful

at the end of key stage 4. They have designed a 'Connections' project in Year 9 to consolidate pupils' knowledge from Year 7 and Year 8. Despite this, some pupils have not had enough opportunities to study a few subjects in sufficient depth. As a result, they struggle to recall important key knowledge. This means that sometimes, teachers have to spend considerable time reviewing key knowledge to enable pupils to progress successfully through the curriculum.

Leaders have identified pupils who need additional support to enable them to read well. They have developed their approach to closing gaps in pupils' reading, although they are aware that there remains work to do in this. Leaders are establishing a wider culture of reading in the school.

Leaders carefully consider the needs of pupils with SEND and adapt the curriculum where necessary to meet their needs. Teaching assistants provide effective support for these pupils in lessons and in 'The Hive'. Pupils with SEND develop secure knowledge and skills.

Pupils behave very well, both in lessons and around the school. The systems to manage and track pupils' behaviour are effective. Leaders respond well to issues and concerns. The school makes appropriate use of alternative provision to support pupils with specific needs or challenges.

Leaders have developed a range of clubs and activities in response to a pupil voice survey. These clubs and activities support the curriculum and enable pupils to learn more about the world beyond school. Pupils are actively involved in local charities and are proud that their school has been recognised as a gold 'Rights Respecting School' by UNICEF. Leaders have established a detailed programme of careers advice and guidance which starts with the 'outstanding learner' project in Year 7 and Year 8. They have carefully considered the context of the school and the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils are supported to access a range of education, training and employment opportunities after leaving school. Pupils experience an effective citizenship, personal, social, health and economic education and relationships and sex education programme. This helps them to be well prepared for life beyond school.

School leaders and those responsible for governance ensure that teachers are supported to do their job effectively and manage their workload. Staff are very positive about working at the school, and describe it as being like 'a family'. Those responsible for governance are ambitious and supportive of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, teachers and adults who work at the school know the pupils very well. There are a large number of staff who have specific responsibilities for safeguarding and who are trained to an appropriate level. There are effective arrangements to identify pupils who may be at risk and to swiftly provide the support that they need. Staff are well trained and know the procedures that they must follow to help to keep pupils safe. There are robust arrangements in place to ensure that staff are recruited safely.

The curriculum is designed to help pupils reduce the risk of being harmed. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, they learn about respectful relationships and how to keep themselves safe in and out of school. Pupils feel safe in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not ensured that pupils have enough time to study the subject in sufficient depth. As a result, some pupils struggle to recall the key information to enable them to build successfully on their learning. Leaders need to review the curriculum offer for all pupils to ensure they have enough time to study the curriculum in sufficient depth.
- Leaders are yet to develop comprehensive systems to support all pupils with weak reading skills. This means that pupils struggle to fully engage with the curriculum and learn and remember key knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils who are weaker readers are supported effectively to enable them to become fluent readers.

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 February 2018.

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	141668
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10269047
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1317
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graham Parker
Headteacher	Peter White
Website	www.saltleyacademy.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 February 2018

Information about this school

- Saltley Academy opened in 2015. It is part of the Washwood Heath Multi-Academy Trust. Governance is provided by the trust and a local body of advocates. The trust also provides a range of support to all aspects of the school's work.
- The school is a large secondary school.
- The school has an on-site specialist autism unit.
- Leaders make use of three registered providers and one unregistered provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 11 with information and engagement about approved technical 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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, the assistant headteachers, senior leaders, subject leaders, groups of staff and five governors,

including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative of an alternative provider by telephone.

- Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils and spoke with pupils in their lessons and around school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, during social times and during their departure from the school site.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, English, history and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, talked to staff, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also visited other sessions on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements. They spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding. The lead inspector met with the designated leader and reviewed the school's systems and single central record.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders at the unregistered provider used by the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of the trustees, and documentation relating to behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and 'free-text' comments. They also took account of the responses to the staff survey. The pupil survey was not completed.

Inspection team

Andrew Madden, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Simon Smith

Ofsted Inspector

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