

# Inspection of Padgate Academy

Insall Road, Warrington WA2 0LN

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Inspection dates: 23 and 24 May 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5  
of the Education Act 2005

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

Padgate Academy is a caring and welcoming learning environment for pupils. New arrivals to the school, including pupils who speak English as an additional language, are helped by staff to settle in quickly.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision), are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' learning about tolerance and respect, in order to establish a culture where diversity is valued and celebrated. Pupils are confident to report incidents of harassment to teachers and know that they will be taken seriously. Leaders take effective action to tackle incidents of bullying. This helps most pupils to feel happy and safe in school.

Staff have increased their expectations of pupils' attendance, behaviour and achievement. The majority of pupils work hard to meet these high expectations. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Most pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education or training.

Pupils benefit from a rich and diverse range of activities to supplement their learning, including trampolining, design club and creative writing. Pupils positively contribute to the school community through becoming ambassadors for areas such as reading, anti-bullying and pupil well-being, as well as participating in the school council.

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

Subject leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Leaders have carefully considered the knowledge that is most important for pupils to learn. They ensure that teachers are clear about what they should teach and when this content should be taught. This helps pupils to connect their new knowledge to what they have learned before.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They choose suitable approaches and resources which help pupils to understand their learning well. That said, from time to time, in a few subjects, teachers do not act to address some pupils' misconceptions quickly enough. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge.

Leaders have recently increased their focus on pupils' reading knowledge. They have identified some pupils in key stage 3 who find reading more difficult. Leaders have implemented appropriate support for these pupils, which is helping them to catch up quickly with their peers. However, some older pupils do not receive the help that they need to become confident, fluent readers. On occasion, this affects how well these pupils access the wider curriculum.

Leaders have established rigorous systems for identifying pupils with SEND. Most teachers utilise the information that they receive from leaders to make suitable adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum, which meet the needs of pupils well. Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision are supported by highly trained staff. Leaders are ambitious for what these pupils can achieve, ensuring that they access the same high-quality curriculum as their peers.

Leaders have identified that, in the past, pupils' poor attendance has had a negative impact on their academic achievement. As a result, they have implemented a range of strategies which have been successful in improving the attendance of pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils.

Pupil's conduct in lessons and around school is typically calm and orderly. Leaders' systems to promote positive behaviour are understood by staff and pupils. This helps teachers to deal with rare incidents of disruption to learning quickly and effectively.

Leaders have designed a rigorous and cohesive programme to support pupils' wider development. Pupils' learning is enhanced through assemblies, speakers and workshops which bring their learning to life. Leaders provide comprehensive careers support for pupils from Year 7 to Year 11, which helps to prepare pupils well for their next steps.

Trust representatives have worked to stabilise leadership in the school following a period of significant turbulence, including by strengthening the governing body. This has ensured that governors have the knowledge and skills required to provide effective support and challenge for leaders in the school.

Governors, leaders and staff at all levels value the opportunities that the trust provides for training, support and collaborative working. Leaders have taken effective steps to reduce staff's workload and to provide support for staff well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have firmly established systems for staff to report concerns about pupils. Staff receive regular training and updates, which keep safeguarding in the forefront of their minds. They are vigilant to the signs that a pupil may need help.

Leaders have strong relationships with external agencies and they are proactive in seeking advice when needed. They are tenacious in their efforts to secure help for their most vulnerable pupils.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn about local risks and online safety. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about the dangers that they may face in their local community.

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

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

- In some subjects, teachers do not check on pupils' learning with sufficient accuracy and rigour. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge which are not identified or addressed quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that they support teachers to use assessment strategies successfully to identify and close gaps in pupils' learning more rapidly.
- Leaders have not sufficiently prioritised identification and support for older pupils who struggle with reading. As a result, some older pupils are not getting the help that they need to develop their reading knowledge so that they keep up with their peers. Leaders should roll out their existing strategies to ensure that older pupils benefit from the same effective systems and processes as those in younger year groups.

## 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>	146765
<b>Local authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267828
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	596
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Carole Owen
<b>Principal</b>	Adam McMillan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.padgateacademy.co.uk">www.padgateacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of The Challenge Academy Trust.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- Padgate Academy converted to become a new academy school in December 2018. When its predecessor school, University Academy Warrington, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be requires improvement overall.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with cognition and learning needs, with capacity for 14 pupils. There are 15 pupils currently using this provision, aged between 11 and 16 years.
- Leaders use alternative provision for a small number of pupils. Of the two providers used, one is registered and the other is unregistered.
- 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 that 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 spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and staff. An inspector spoke with members of the local governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.
- An inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils from Years 7 to 11 about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the school's single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, art and design, history and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.

## Inspection team

Charlotte Oles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Anne Murphy

Ofsted Inspector

Karen Pomeroy

Ofsted 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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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