

# Inspection of Four Dwellings Academy

Dwellings Lane, Quinton, Birmingham B32 1RJ

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 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 Good

The principal of this school is Claire Stoneman. This school is part of Academies Enterprise Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Rebecca Boomer-Clark, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Hall. There is also a regional educational director, Damien Kearns, who is responsible for this school and three others.

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

Pupils are happy at Four Dwellings Academy, and they and the staff take pride in their diverse school and the place it holds in the local community. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that the school provides, including various sports, a recent trip to France and a photography trip to Birmingham. Pupils report that they enjoy these opportunities. They also say they appreciate other changes which leaders have introduced, often through consultation with the student council. This includes the basketball hoops on the playground, for example, as well as changes in the canteen.

Leaders recognised that standards at the school had slipped and have acted effectively to bring about improvements. The work they have undertaken on the curriculum means there is a sharper focus on the key knowledge pupils need to know and remember. Pupils now benefit from an ambitious curriculum which is taught with increasing consistency.

There is also a more consistent approach to behaviour, which means the school is calm and well-ordered. Pupils recognise the improvements that leaders have introduced, and report that behaviour has improved in lessons and at social times. Leaders have worked effectively to deepen relationships with local families, establishing a community hub in the school. In this way, leaders have ensured the school sits at the heart of the local community again.

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

On taking up her position, the new principal was clear that there were too many inconsistencies in the quality of curriculum. Consequently, the school has changed the curriculum in some subject areas and ensured that the English Baccalaureate is at the heart of their offer. Other refinements to subject curriculum design have focused on the key knowledge that pupils need to know and remember, and the order in which this is taught. This work has been effective and the curriculum is now more uniformly ambitious across the school. The teaching of the curriculum is more consistent too. Leaders provided staff with training on effective teaching strategies to develop their practice. However, there remain some inconsistencies in how well the curriculum is delivered. Sometimes the design of the activity is not best suited to the pupils' learning. On other occasions there can be a lack of clarity around the key knowledge that pupils need to know. When either is the case, some pupils struggle to learn the key knowledge they need to progress through the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified accurately and appropriate adaptations and support are put in place. Therefore, they achieve well.

The school has clarified expectations for behaviour and attendance. This has had a positive impact. Leaders have taken effective steps to work with pupils who find it harder to meet these expectations. Their analysis shows where further work is needed, but the number of suspensions has fallen considerably. Well-understood

routines and a calm, respectful atmosphere are the norm in the school. Strategic work on attendance means that pupils are supported to attend school regularly, and overall attendance rates are high.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is well designed, comprehensive and taught by subject specialists. The curriculum is adjusted appropriately to respond to global or local developments. Pupils learn about careers within the PSHE curriculum from Year 7. Their understanding of future opportunities is enhanced by a range of visiting speakers and employers who come to school. There are also visits to local post-16 providers as well as universities. There are a range of clubs and trips, and leaders track attendance at these. They support pupils who are disadvantaged to attend the clubs and are aiming to increase the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who take advantage of these opportunities. There are a range of leadership opportunities in the school, and pupils talk about how they have informed leaders about improvements they have suggested. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is informed through the religious education curriculum, as well as through a number of cultural days through the school year.

Leaders have carefully considered how the school can better engage with the local community. Staff support this vision. They report that leaders have been supportive with matters of workload. Training for staff is significant and focused on the areas of development that leaders have identified. Staff appreciate that it is personalised to their agreed needs. Leaders' actions have been strongly grounded in educational research, ensuring the right actions are being undertaken to improve the school, in the right order. The trust has supported leaders effectively, including the new principal. They have ensured their support is more focused to support leaders to maintain high standards.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Occasionally, there is some inconsistency in teachers' implementation of the planned curriculum. Consequently, some pupils struggle to learn the key knowledge they need. The school should make sure that consistently effective teaching strategies enable all pupils to learn and remember key knowledge.
- Some pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, do not take consistent advantage of the range of extra-curricular opportunities the school provide. This means their experience of school is less enriched. Leaders should continue to monitor the range and uptake of extra-curricular opportunities and support the more vulnerable pupils to take advantage of the opportunities provided.

## 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139047
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290592
<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>	571
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Hall
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Rebecca Boomer-Clark
<b>Principal</b>	Claire Stoneman
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.fourwellingsacademy.org">www.fourwellingsacademy.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	11 and 12 October 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Academies Enterprise Trust.
- The principal was appointed in September 2022.
- Leaders make use of three registered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- As a part of this inspection, inspectors met with trust representatives, the trust's chief executive officer (CEO), senior leaders, subject leaders and teaching staff as well as other employees in the school. They also scrutinised trustee meeting minutes.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in: English, mathematics, science, geography and modern foreign languages. They also looked at examples of pupils' work in other subjects. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited lessons in some other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's extra-curricular activities, enrichment programme and careers and personal development programmes with leaders and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's behaviour and attendance records with school leaders.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, at various points in the inspection. They took account of responses to a staff survey, a pupil survey, Ofsted Parent View and the free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Andrew Madden, lead inspector

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