

# Inspection of Grestone Academy

Grestone Avenue, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham, West Midlands B20 1ND

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Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Deborah Steen. This school is part of Hamstead Hall Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jonathan Mortimer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Rob Smith.

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

Pupils are proud to attend Grestone Academy. They are kind and have great manners at this happy school. This is because the school's values are so important to them. The values are based on the word 'PRIDE' and represent perseverance, respect, independence, diversity and excellence. Pupils know and show these values in their conduct. They are thrilled to be rewarded for displaying the values in the weekly Friday assembly.

Pupils behave consistently well both in the classroom and outdoors. Staff know pupils well. Positive relationships are at the centre of everything that the school does. Pupils have a genuine understanding of those who need additional support to learn or behave. They are happy and safe at this school because staff are vigilant and deal appropriately with any concerns pupils may have.

There is an ambition for the pupils. Teachers inspire them, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to have high aspirations. Staff help pupils to enjoy their learning and to achieve well.

Enrichment beyond the academic curriculum is an important part of the school's vision. Pupils enjoy the range of educational trips, visitors and clubs offered. There are leadership opportunities for pupils, including as 'learning leads' and school councillors.

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

The school is led and managed well. Improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Leaders quickly pick up on what needs to be addressed and ensure that swift action is taken. Leaders support one another and are supported effectively by the trust.

Pupils study an ambitious curriculum. Leaders have prioritised their work to improve the curriculum. They have made important changes to ensure that subjects are sequenced well. This work has ensured that pupils secure key knowledge, skills and vocabulary in an order that builds in complexity from early years onwards. Overall, leaders know how well the curriculum is delivered. However, in a few subjects, the school is in the process of implementing a newly revised curriculum. Where this is the case, the school's understanding of how effectively the curriculum is being taught is less secure.

Lessons are well structured. Teachers present information clearly so that pupils learn new knowledge and find lessons enjoyable. Leaders have broken down learning into small steps and link this learning together. This helps pupils, including those with SEND, to be successful. In mathematics, for example, younger pupils learning their times tables are encouraged to look for number patterns. Grasping this important foundation helps pupils when older to carry out more complex multiplication methods. Pupils can remember their learning well. For example, in history, they

confidently shared their knowledge about events on a timeline. They knew that the Tudors existed at the same time as the Edo people in Benin.

The teaching of reading and phonics is a high priority in school. The school has embedded its early reading scheme. Skilled staff ensure that pupils learn their early phonics sounds successfully. Should a pupil start to fall behind, teachers quickly provide focused support, which helps pupils catch up. The books pupils read are well matched to their reading ability. This means that pupils enjoy reading because they understand the books they are reading. Older pupils analyse and discuss texts in detail, while pupils of all ages love listening to their teachers read good-quality texts with enthusiasm.

Staff identify, at an early stage, the specific needs of pupils with SEND. The school takes and acts on advice from external agencies where required. Staff adapt learning so that pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. As a result, all pupils learn well.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is positive. There is almost no low-level disruption in lessons. Pupils know and follow the school's expectations well. Children in early years quickly settle into routines that help them learn. This is the foundation for good behaviour later in school. Pupils' attendance is a high priority for the school and is improving. The family support team communicates well with families to improve attendance.

The school offers an impressive range of opportunities to support pupils' broader development. Their spiritual, moral and social development is of high quality.

Those responsible for governance share leaders' high ambitions for pupils. They make effective checks on many different aspects of school life. The school engages well with staff about their workload and well-being. Staff work well as a team and feel valued.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some subject leaders are new to their role or are in the process of implementing a newly revised curriculum. This means that they are at the early stages of understanding the strengths and next steps to develop their subject. The school should ensure that all subject leaders have a clear understanding of what is required to further develop their subjects so that pupils achieve as well as they can.

## 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>	139904
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290603
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	394
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Rob Smith
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Jonathan Mortimer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Deborah Steen
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.grestoneacademy.com">www.grestoneacademy.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been some staff changes, including a new headteacher who took up post in April 2023.
- No pupils attend alternative provision.

## 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.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the chief executive officer, other leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. They also met with groups of staff and pupils.
- To evaluate the school's curriculum, deep dives were conducted in early reading, mathematics, English, history and design technology. Inspectors spoke to curriculum leaders and teachers, visited a sample of lessons and reviewed pupils' work with them.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about pupils' behaviour and attendance and about the school's policies and procedures. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. An inspector discussed the school's analysis of attendance with leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed information about other areas of learning and the wider curriculum.
- The lead inspector spoke with the external consultant for school improvement.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- The lead inspector met with those responsible for governance, including the chair of the local governing body.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff were considered through discussions and looking at information collected from Ofsted's online surveys.

## Inspection team

Lynda Townsend, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Nicola Price

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Emma Gater

His Majesty's Inspector

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