

# Inspection of The Hereford Academy

Marlbrook Road, Redhill, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 7NG

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Inspection dates: 6 to 7 February 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Michael Stoppard. This school is part of The Diocese of Hereford Multi-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, Andrew Teale, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Will Finn.

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

The Hereford Academy is a calm and welcoming place. Pupils enjoy a warm and friendly culture where the values of 'aspiration, care, trust, resilience and respect' are lived. They are polite to visitors and keen to talk about their school.

The school is developing a strong, ambitious curriculum for the academic achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It recognises that, for too long, pupils have not achieved well enough. The school has made positive changes to the curriculum as a result. However, it is too soon to see the full impact that these changes have had on the quality of education for pupils.

Pupils value leaders' commitment to creating an environment free from discrimination where other cultures are celebrated. The school teaches pupils not to accept any bullying behaviour. Bullying is dealt with swiftly on the rare occasions it happens and action is taken quickly to address it.

The school offers plenty of clubs for pupils to develop their interests. For example, pupils partake eagerly in clubs such as football, LGBTQ+ society, the whole-school show, debating club and a school choir (who recently proudly sang in Hereford Cathedral). Over 10% of pupils are completing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

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

Leaders, including governors, have an ambitious vision for the quality of education that they want pupils to receive. Following a period of turbulence, the school has stabilised the leadership well. The school has recruited a strong team of middle leaders to further develop the curriculum offer. The curriculum has been strengthened to ensure that it increasingly meets the needs of pupils. For example, the proportion of pupils choosing to study the English Baccalaureate has increased rapidly. The published GCSE outcomes do not reflect the much-improved quality of education pupils receive now.

Since the last inspection, the school has completed a considerable amount of work on developing the curriculum and how it is implemented in lessons. However, much of this work is in the early stages and still needs time to embed. For example, in some subjects, there is clear curriculum planning for what should be taught and when. However, in other subjects, this is still in development. In some lessons, curriculum planning is adapted well to take into account what pupils already know and understand. However, in other lessons, teachers do not adapt the curriculum to take into account different starting points. This slows the progress that pupils make across the curriculum.

On some occasions, teachers regularly check pupils' understanding in line with the school's '8 strategies'. In these cases, they identify and remedy misconceptions.

However, some teachers do not always use assessment effectively enough to identify gaps in pupils' learning. As a result, some pupils struggle to develop a secure understanding across the curriculum.

There is a high level of ambition for pupils with SEND. The school identifies pupils with these needs very well. Teachers receive clear training and information on how they can help these pupils. They use this training well to support pupils' understanding and access to the curriculum. Consequently, pupils with SEND successfully access the same curriculum as their peers and achieve well.

The school has worked hard to raise the profile of reading across the school. When pupils start, teachers quickly identify the gaps in pupils' reading ability, and effective support is put in place to help them improve their reading skills. However, the school understands that more should be done to ensure that there are a range of opportunities to build pupils' confidence in reading across the curriculum.

Personal development is a strength of the school. The well-designed programme ensures pupils know how to keep themselves healthy and safe, and how to navigate different relationships, including online. Pupils recall discussing topics with interest and empathy. Curriculum choices support pupils' wider understanding of the world. For example, in history, the teaching of the First World War was very effective in exploring, in a meaningful way, the required subject content of issues of sexism and misogyny. There is a comprehensive careers programme and a strong enrichment programme.

The school has high expectations of pupils' conduct. Leaders have strategically used rewards and sanctions to improve behaviour. In the main, pupils behave well and show compassion for each other. Relationships with staff are generally very good.

Raising attendance is a school priority. The school takes a measured and strategic approach to improving attendance, and pupil attendance rates have improved rapidly. However, attendance rates still fall below the national average.

Staff, including early career teachers, feel that leaders support them well and consider their workload carefully. Those responsible for governance are committed to the school. They work regularly with leaders and provide effective support and challenge.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some curriculum planning is still in development and is yet to be embedded. Where this is the case, pupils' experience of the curriculum is variable and

learning does not always build effectively on their starting points. Newly appointed subject leaders have identified the right things to change but have not yet had time to implement these changes. Leaders should continue to support and monitor the implementation of the curriculum revisions to ensure that the quality of education continues to improve for all pupils in all subjects.

- The school has not ensured that all teachers use assessment strategies in lessons well enough to check what pupils know and remember. As a result, teachers do not consistently identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. The school should ensure that all teachers use assessment methods effectively to adapt their delivery of lessons to identify and address pupils' misconceptions.
- Opportunities for pupils to read effectively in class and across the wider curriculum are not always taken. As a result, teaching does not always support the development of pupils' reading as well as it could. The school should continue to prioritise reading across all subject areas so that all pupils learn to read confidently and fluently.

## 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>	135662
<b>Local authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290583
<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>	607
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	William Finn
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Andrew Teale
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Stoppard
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.theherefordacademy.org.uk/">www.theherefordacademy.org.uk/</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	30 June and 1 July 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Hereford Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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.

- 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 held discussions with school leaders at all levels. Inspectors also met with staff, trust executive leaders, including the chief executive officer, the chair of trustees and members of the local academy board.
- The inspectors conducted deep dives in the following subjects: English, science, geography, modern foreign languages and design and technology. 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.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons in other subjects, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of their work.
- 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.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, members of the pastoral team and leaders with oversight of pupils' personal, social and health education provision and careers education.
- A range of documents were checked, including behaviour logs, attendance records, minutes of governors' meetings, school improvement plans and school policies.
- Inspectors held telephone discussions with a senior member of staff from the registered alternative provider used by the school.
- Inspectors held formal meetings with pupils. Behaviour was observed both in lessons and around the school. Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

## Inspection team

Guy Shears, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Steer	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Field	Ofsted Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector

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