

Inspection of Beacon Hill Academy

High Arcal Drive, Sedgley, Dudley, West Midlands DY3 1BP

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Sukhjot Dhami. This school is part of Dudley Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jo Higgins, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lowell Williams.

What is it like to attend this school?

Beacon Hill Academy is a school where everyone goes the extra mile for their pupils. As one parent, typical of many others, stated, 'I find the teachers to be dedicated and committed to the pupils succeeding.' Pupils are happy and speak warmly about the many improvements that the school has put in place for them.

The school has worked purposefully to raise expectations for what pupils can achieve, and this is reflected in improving published outcomes. There have also been improvements in the range of trips, clubs and activities available. These include visits to the USA, Germany and Africa as well as clubs such as cooking, creative writing, sport and singing. Pupils appreciate these opportunities and make good use of them.

Pupils are clear that behaviour is good thanks to the school's well understood expectations. They state that they have confidence in approaching adults if they have concerns. Relationships between pupils and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture. Pupils appreciate that their voice is heard in the improvements that have taken place, for example in wider range of extra-curricular opportunities now available.

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

The school has designed an increasingly ambitious curriculum which is taught with high levels of consistency. In lessons, teachers have a significant focus on defining and applying the key knowledge that pupils need. Thanks to extensive checking for understanding, assessment is used very effectively to identify and close any gaps in pupils' learning. All this means that pupils learn the curriculum well, including more vulnerable groups. Leaders are committed to increase the proportion of pupils who take modern languages or separate sciences as options. This will ensure the EBacc qualifications sit at the heart of their curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs accurately identified and appropriate adaptations are put in place to support them, whether in the classroom or the resource base. As a result, these pupils achieve well and are effectively supported by a dedicated and highly knowledgeable team.

Reading is embedded into the culture of the school, given the proportion of pupils who start with low reading ages. The school provides prompt and effective support for these pupils to enable them to become fluent readers. Leaders work well to support pupils in their reading as they progress through the school.

Thanks to the school's clear expectations, pupils behave well at Beacon Hill Academy. In class, they are attentive and supportive of each other. Around the site, pupils interact positively and are polite and courteous to visitors. If pupils struggle to meet the school's expectations, leaders use a range of strategies to support them to improve their choices. The school analyses behaviour patterns across the school

closely, enabling leaders to act promptly to support individuals. Due to these approaches, levels of suspensions are falling across the school.

The school has worked extensively on attendance. With the support of the trust, this is a well-resourced priority with a significant strategic approach. The school's approach has improved attendance rates, as well as significant successes for some pupils who had periods of extended absence. That said, leaders recognise that there remain pupils whose attendance is still too low, despite the school's extensive engagement with their parents and external agencies.

The school has ensured that there is a well mapped out and ambitious curriculum for the pupils' personal development. There are many extra-curricular opportunities, and the school is working to ensure that the pupils who would benefit most attend them. Pupils receive regular information about careers and future destinations throughout their time at the school. In this way pupils are well informed about opportunities for future study and employment.

Leaders are increasingly incisive in their analysis of the school's many strengths which they have secured thanks to systematic improvements across the school's provision. This enables them to review the provision and to act quickly to ensure high standards of consistency across all aspects of the school. The trust supports leaders well with resources and external review. Governors are highly committed and knowledgeable about the school and its position within the community. They effectively and supportively hold leaders to account. Staff are highly positive about the opportunities for professional development at Beacon Hill. They report that leaders have significant engagement with them and are mindful of workload. Parents appreciate the significant efforts which the school has placed on communication as well as the improvements across all aspects of the school's provision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although leaders have an effective strategic and coherent approach to the management of attendance, current overall school attendance is below national levels, including absence rates for more vulnerable pupils. This means there remain pupils who miss too much school and learning. The school needs to continue to work closely with parents and external agencies to instil the importance of regular attendance for all pupils.
- Until recently, pupils have not been able to take separate sciences at GCSE and the number of pupils opting to study a language at key stage 4 remains relatively low. This means that the proportion of pupils completing the suite of subjects

which makes up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) remains below the government's national ambition. Leaders should continue with their current plans to introduce separate sciences at GCSE and increase numbers studying languages, so that the EBacc sits at the heart of the curriculum for key stage 4.

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

Unique reference number	137705
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10294577
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	1,079
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lowell Williams
CEO	Jo Higgins
Principal	Sukhjot Dhani
Website	http://www.beaconhillacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 and 4 November 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Dudley Academies Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider and one unregistered 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.

- The 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, 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.
- As a part of this inspection, the inspectors met with trustees and the chair of the local advisory committee, senior leaders, subject leaders and teaching staff, as well as other employees in the school. An inspector also looked at copies of minutes from trust and local advisory committee meetings.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in: English, mathematics, history, business studies and science. They also visited lessons in other subjects. For each deep dive, the 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 reviewed the school's extra-curricular activities, enrichment programme and the careers and personal development programmes with leaders and pupils.
- The inspectors reviewed the school's behaviour and attendance records with school leaders.
- The 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, Ofsted Parent View and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Andrew Madden, lead inspector His Majesty's Inspector

Jo Evans Ofsted Inspector

Mark Bailie Ofsted Inspector

Geoff Renwick Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024