

Inspection of Tile Cross Academy

Gressel Lane, Tile Cross, Birmingham, West Midlands B33 9UF

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 June 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 headteacher of this school is Paul Marano. This school is part of Washwood Heath 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, Pete Weir, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Graham Parker.

What is it like to attend this school?

Tile Cross is a much-improved, good school. Pupils speak positively about the changes they have seen and are clear that this is a school where expectations for pupils are high, where behaviour is good and where staff will go the extra mile to provide opportunities. Pupils are happy and know that all are respected from different backgrounds, as the school prides itself on the welcome it gives to pupils.

Pupils have responded well to the school's raised expectations around behaviour. This means that they play happily with each other at social times, and the vast majority listen attentively in lessons. They trust adults to deal with any concerns they might raise with them. Pupils understand too the importance of regular attendance thanks to work the school has undertaken.

Pupils speak highly of the many opportunities which the school provides for them. This includes a recent visit to parliament, trips abroad to USA and Hamburg and a sailing experience. There are also many opportunities in the school including celebrations of the school's diversity and work undertaken to raise money for charity. Pupils value these opportunities as they help them to see their place in the world and the wider community.

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

The school has updated and reviewed its curriculum extensively in response to the pupils' entry points when they start at Tile Cross, as well as examination outcomes. This review has included adjustments to the subjects on offer as well as clearer identification of the core knowledge pupils need to learn and remember. The school is working to increase the proportion of pupils who study subjects that contribute to the EBacc through a refined curriculum for modern languages, as well as support for community languages.

Thanks to embedded use of the trust's learning cycle, teachers select activities which build on pupils learning well. Although assessment is often used effectively to identify when pupils have misconceptions or gaps in their understanding, on some occasions this is not the case. This means that these gaps can persist, as they are missed.

The school ensures that all pupils are assessed on entry for their reading levels. Appropriate support is then put in place which enables those with weaker reading to be supported to rapidly catch up. Wider reading is promoted well through use of reading schemes and a well-stocked library.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) across the school is strong. The school assesses pupils on entry, and work with pupils' parents and previous schools to ensure they have a secure grasp of pupils' needs. Teachers use the information provided to support pupils well in class, often in quite subtle ways. As a result, these pupils make progress in line with their peers.

Leaders have successfully renewed structures and expectations around pupil behaviour based on the school's core values. This means that there is a more common understanding around conduct which pupils have responded to positively. Leaders have used the data they have gathered rigorously to continue to raise expectations, as they are conscious there are pupils who need further support to meet them. As a result of this, the number of suspensions has fallen.

The school has taken a similarly rigorous and systematic approach to attendance, with support from outside agencies and liaison with parents. This has resulted in improved attendance, although the school recognises that there is still more work to do.

Pupils benefit from a well-structured personal development programme at Tile Cross. This is organised around key themes which are revisited in ways appropriate to pupils' age. In this programme they are taught to live healthily and to keep themselves safe. Pupils are taught about the character traits which the school have identified as important: ready, respectful, responsible, resilient and reflective. Pupils are rewarded for demonstrating these, which they value. They understand too the place of difference and equality in the school thanks to considered assemblies and visits. The school's work on careers enables pupils to be ready for the next stage of their education. Leaders are proud to have secured full bursaries for a number of pupils to study at other schools for sixth form.

Staff are positive about working at Tile Cross and appreciate the fact that leaders work with them effectively. One member of staff described it as being like 'a family'. They report that workload is managed appropriately, and they are proud of the improvements that have been made. In this, the trust has supported and led effective work to ensure consistency, especially around teaching, learning and oracy. Leaders liaise with many external providers to secure appropriate support and provision for their pupils. The school's work to support disadvantaged pupils is a significant strength. This has ensured that disadvantage does not hold pupils back from participating fully in school life and achieving well. Trustees and advocates support and challenge the school effectively. They are ambitious for the school and its pupils and have a forensic understanding of the progress it has made.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There remain a small number of pupils who find it hard to meet the school's expectations for consistently good behaviour. This means they can make poor choices, and some are more likely to experience sanctions or be suspended on

repeated occasions. The school should sustain its work to ensure all pupils meet the school's expectations consistently.

- There remain some pupils who have higher levels of absence or poor punctuality than their peers. This means some pupils 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 and punctual attendance for these pupils.
- On occasions assessment is not used precisely enough. This means that gaps in pupils' learning can persist. The school should ensure that teachers use assessment effectively to identify misconceptions and ensure pupils are systemically supported to take the identified steps to improve.

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	144306
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10294631
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	631
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graham Parker
CEO	Pete Weir
Headteacher	Paul Marano
Website	tilecross.academy
Date(s) of previous inspection	19 and 20 October 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Washwood Heath Multi Academy Trust.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers.
- 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 inspector(s) 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 has 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 including the chair, senior leaders, subject leaders, teaching staff as well as other employees in the school. An inspector also looked at copies of minutes from trust and local advisor committee meetings.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in: English, mathematics, science, geography and modern languages. 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 their careers and personal development programmes with leaders and pupils.
- The inspectors reviewed the school's behaviour and attendance records with school leaders. The lead inspector spoke to one of the registered alternative provision providers which the school uses.
- 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 freetext responses.

Inspection team

Andrew Madden, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mark Fenton	Ofsted Inspector
Eddie Wilkes	Ofsted Inspector

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