

Inspection of a good school: Heart of England School

Gipsy Lane, Balsall Common, Coventry, West Midlands CV7 7FW

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 May 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Jacqueline Hughes-Williams. This school is part of the Heart of England School academy trust, a single-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. It is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anne Lycett.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and students in the sixth form say that they feel safe at this school because they have many ways of asking for help if they need it. They all agree that the school helps them to understand how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations.

Pupils say that bullying does happen sometimes, but the vast majority are confident that when it does, they can report it and they will be listened to.

The school is usually calm and orderly during break times. Most pupils show respect for one another and for adults. Pupils and students are confident and articulate. They make visitors welcome and are keen to share their views.

In lessons, most teachers have high expectations, and most pupils strive to achieve them. However, sometimes learning is disrupted, particularly when pupils struggle to access the curriculum, becoming frustrated as a result. This is not the case in the sixth form, where students are highly motivated, independent learners, who are very confident ask for any support they may need.

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

The school has undertaken a rigorous review and revision of much of the curriculum. They have ensured that the curriculum is carefully designed to identify what needs to be learned when. However, the school has recognised that there is not enough focus on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, some pupils with SEND do not make enough progress and become demotivated.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and are keen to share this with pupils. However, they do not all have the skills and understanding to select the best resources and activities to support pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. In part this is because, although pupils' SEND needs are quickly identified, information about how to respond to these has not yet been made as easily accessible as it should be, particularly while the ongoing training seeks to improve teachers' expertise in this important area.

The school's focus on assessment is paying dividends. Subject leaders have worked hard to ensure that the right things are being assessed in the right way at the right time. Consequently, assessment is increasingly able to rapidly identify gaps and misconceptions, which is well used to inform next steps in learning. This is supported by a simple but effective shared model of teaching and learning, which helps teachers to introduce new learning effectively and to monitor how well pupils are learning and remembering. Leaders are now working on ensuring that all staff are using this model consistently.

Reading is a high priority in the school. Those who struggle with reading are very well supported. Reading buddies are well established and pupils spoken with all reported increased confidence in their reading as their fluency and comprehension improves. Older pupils, including sixth-form students, who act as buddies, are justifiably proud of their work to help others and the impact it is having. Dedicated reading time in tutor sessions

and a reading programme for those who need early reading help are having a positive impact. Many pupils said that they enjoy reading and are looking forward to the opening of the new library.

The school has ensured that pupils have an increasingly broad range of opportunities to develop their interests and talents and to gain experiences beyond the academic curriculum. There are many clubs and activities and a comprehensive careers programme, which helps pupils and students to prepare for their next steps.

The school works diligently to improve overall attendance and reduce persistent absence, achieving significant success. However, the attendance of some groups of pupils is not improving at the same rate and the same groups feature too prominently in suspensions.

Staff are very positive about the support they receive from leaders. They feel that their workload is taken into account and that, if they need help, they will receive it.

Recently, leaders have taken significant steps to improve communication with parents and carers. However, the school does not always keep parents well informed about the actions they have taken to support pupils; to improve provision or to respond to parental feedback. Nor are parents always made aware of the reasons that a course of action has not been possible. This means that, sometimes, parents are not aware that their voices have been listened to.

School and trust leaders work well together so that all responsibilities are carried out effectively. Trustees know the school well. They provide the right balance of challenge and support to help drive further improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not made sure that all teachers have the skills, understanding and information they require to better meet the needs of pupils with SEND. This means that too many do not make the progress they should. The school should expedite their plans to improve this aspect of the curriculum provision, taking a holistic approach that will address the poorer attendance and high number of suspensions that is a feature within this group of pupils.
- Communication with parents is not as good as it should be. As a result, parents do not always have a full picture of what is happening to support their child, or why. Moreover, some very positive responses by school leaders to parent voice have not been shared. This means that some parents find it more difficult to support the school and to

recognise its aim of continual improvement. The school should ensure that communication routes are further improved, shared with parents, and monitored for their impact.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2018

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	136909
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10294574
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1245
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	167
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anne Lycett
Principal	Jacqueline Hughes-Williams
Website	http://www.heart-england.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- During this inspection an acting principal was in post.
- The school makes use of four registered alternative providers and one unregistered alternative provider.
- 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

- 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 acting principal, the vice principal, assistant principals, the special educational needs coordinator and members of the board of trustees, including the chairperson.
- Inspectors also spoke to curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector also spoke directly to some parents.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector spoke to leaders about the whole school reading curriculum and visited a reading support session.
- Inspectors reviewed the work of the school to improve attendance.
- Inspectors considered the school's work to support pupils' wider development.
- 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.

Inspection team

Mel Ford, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mike Onyon

Ofsted Inspector

Graeme Rudland

Ofsted Inspector

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