

Inspection of Grange Academy

Halsey Road, Kempston, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 8AU

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love attending Grange Academy. They often smile as they arrive in the morning and are eager to start their lessons. They behave well throughout the day and are respectful to one another, to staff and to visitors.

Pupils are well cared for. They feel safe in school. They know there is always someone they can talk to if they have any concerns or worries. Pupils are well supervised at breaktimes and are confident that adults will deal with bullying effectively should it happen.

Pupils know that leaders have high expectations of what they can achieve. They know what they have to do to be successful. There is a very calm, purposeful atmosphere in the school. As a result, pupils can concentrate, work hard in their lessons and achieve well. Pupils experience an ambitious curriculum. They are supported well to develop their own strengths and interests. All pupils leave the school to continue learning in further education.

Parents and carers are really pleased with the school. During the inspection, one parent echoed the feelings of others, saying: 'All staff are warm and friendly. They understand my children's individual needs and work with them as an individual child.'

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

The curriculum content ensures pupils learn essential life skills as well as gain qualifications. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

For the most part, leaders have thought carefully about what the pupils will learn and the order in which they will be taught this knowledge. While this is the case, the content and order of some aspects of the curriculum subjects in key stage 2 are less clear. This means that sometimes pupils do not build their knowledge as securely as possible or learn as well as they should.

Leaders have developed their own assessment system to ensure that teachers identify any gaps in learning and put appropriate support in place. Not all teachers are using this system consistently well, so some pupils do not always remember what they have been taught.

Leaders focus on teaching pupils to learn to read well and develop a wide range of vocabulary. Well-trained staff help pupils to build their phonics knowledge. Pupils read books that are well suited to their reading ability. Some of the older pupils have improved their comprehension skills through the revised reading curriculum. These sessions are interesting and motivating for these pupils. Teachers select texts which focus on real-life situations and are meaningful to pupils' experiences. Pupils use their reading knowledge well to access other areas of the curriculum.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Relationships between staff and pupils are based upon mutual respect. There are a few pupils who sometimes struggle to manage their own emotions or anxieties. Behaviour management plans are in place for these pupils, to ensure staff use a consistent approach. Staff know their pupils well and are able to defuse potentially tricky situations. Consequently, learning is rarely disrupted by challenging behaviour.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. The curriculum is thoughtfully planned to ensure pupils are supported well to pursue their aspirations and future careers. For example, pupils learn to discuss the skills they need to do the jobs they like through the work-related programme. Staff provide practice interviews so pupils are prepared for questions they may be asked in the future. The well-thought-out careers programme also helps pupils and parents make informed choices about pupils' next steps.

Pupils take part in a range of activities that help them to develop their social and moral understanding. The relationships, social and health education programme prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils learn about different faiths and cultures, appropriate relationships, and personal safety in school and in the wider community, as well as online.

Staff are proud of the school and feel valued by leaders. They appreciate the training opportunities they are given to develop their expertise and the steps leaders take to reduce unnecessary workload.

Trustees and governors have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They work with senior leaders to make sure that the school's improvement priorities are achievable and measurable. The trust supports and challenges leaders effectively to ensure leaders are held to account for the quality of education pupils receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding. Thorough systems are in place for the safe recruitment of staff and to record safeguarding concerns.

Leaders ensure that all staff complete safeguarding training. Staff have a clear understanding of the ways in which pupils are vulnerable. Positive communication between parents, external agencies and the school means that any concerns are rapidly acted upon.

Important aspects of safeguarding are woven throughout the curriculum. As a result, pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe. Pupils who need extra help to learn to keep safe are supported through carefully considered individual plans.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The planning in many curriculum subjects is detailed and the desired end points for the pupils are clear and achievable. However, the curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some aspects of the primary curriculum. This means that pupils do not remember and build on their knowledge as well as they should. Teachers should ensure that pupils understand what they are learning and how the skills they are acquiring will help them in the future.
- The assessment system is well established across the school. However, some staff do not fully understand the difference between the implementation of the planned curriculum and the effective use of assessment. This results in teachers being less clear about exactly what pupils need to learn and remember. Leaders need to ensure that all staff can consider pupils' progress through the planned curriculum and can identify the appropriate next steps for each individual pupil.

The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear that leaders have already taken action to plan next year's curriculum and to train staff in how to deliver it. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	139374
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10211279
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	128
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gill Lake
Headteacher	Angela Morris
Website	www.grange.beds.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Grange Academy is part of the Bedford Inclusive Learning and Teaching and Training Trust.
- Currently, the headteacher is an acting head of school. The acting head of school previously led the secondary department.
- The school caters for pupils aged five to 16, all with special educational needs. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, science, and relationships, social and health education. This included discussions with leaders and scrutiny of curriculum planning documents, pupils' personal targets and EHC

plans. Inspectors visited lessons, listened to children read, talked to pupils and scrutinised their work.

- The lead inspector met members of the local governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. Meetings were held with the acting head of school and other senior leaders. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and staff both formally and informally during the inspection.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school self-evaluation report and the school development plan. Inspectors also reviewed minutes of meetings of the governing body and the extended leadership team and records of the monitoring of teaching and learning. Parent and staff surveys and information relating to pupils' attendance and achievement were analysed.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. They scrutinised a range of safeguarding documentation, including the single central record and records relating to behaviour incidents. Inspectors met with the designated lead for safeguarding and discussed training with staff.
- The inspector considered 16 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire to parents, Ofsted Parent View, and 16 free texts from parents. They also considered 24 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.

Inspection team

Lynda Walker, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Helen Jones

Ofsted Inspector

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