

Inspection of a good school: Bristnall Hall Academy

Bristnall Hall Lane, Oldbury, West Midlands B68 9PA

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 November 2021

Outcome

Bristnall Hall Academy continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if the inspectors were to carry out a section 5 inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say how happy they are coming to school. They enjoy their work. They are excited about their learning. Leaders have high expectations for all. Consequently, all pupils have access to the full range of subjects. This includes those who need additional support, so that they do not miss out on any subjects. Pupils achieve highly in their studies, including in English and mathematics.

The school goes above and beyond to ensure pupils feel safe in school. Every pupil who responded to the questionnaire said there was an adult they could talk to if they felt worried. Pupils said bullying occurs sometimes, but it is very clear that leaders respond and deal well with all incidents reported. Behaviour in lessons is of a very high standard as pupils have positive attitudes to their learning.

Despite the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, all pupils from Years 7 to 10 took part in a 'virtual work experience'. This included research into local labour needs. The experience helped them prepare for the future world of work. The school participates in a 'FareShare' support programme to ensure all their families have sufficient food and clothing.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. It takes accounts of pupils' different starting points and needs. All pupils study a wide range of subjects for as long as possible, including languages. A high percentage go on to successfully achieve in all of the EBacc subjects (English, mathematics, science, a humanities subject and a language) at GCSE. There is an extensive choice of vocational qualifications. This helps pupils to achieve very high outcomes and prepares them well for their next steps.

The curriculum is very well sequenced. It ensures that pupils build on and apply their knowledge to new learning. For example, in Year 7 Spanish, pupils are secure in their knowledge of numbers. Consequently, they can go on to talk about important dates when they learn the months of the year.

Reading and writing have a very high priority in the curriculum. Teachers check pupils' grammar and spellings in other subjects, including geography. In practical subjects, for example food and nutrition, pupils complete their assignments and coursework successfully.

Teachers make regular checks on how well pupils are doing. This happens both at 'data capture' points during the year, as well as in lessons. As a result, teachers address misconceptions early on and plan next steps in learning.

Teachers adapt their curriculum plans appropriately to meet the needs of all learners. This ensures that the high number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those with education, health and care plans engage exceptionally well with their learning across all subjects. Additional support in both lower and upper sets helps these pupils to achieve highly. Curriculum plans in science are not as explicit about adaptations as they are in other subjects, such as geography.

The additional 'Period 7' allows pupils to catch up where they have missed learning due to COVID-19. In addition, it promotes pupils' broader development in enrichment activities, such as dodgeball.

Pupils behave exceptionally well in school. Lessons are largely free of any low-level disruptive behaviour. Pupils of different backgrounds get on particularly well together in lessons.

The school prepares pupils very well for life in modern and culturally diverse Britain. Pupils respect others with differences. They have a good understanding of democracy.

The staff questionnaire indicated clearly that leaders are mindful of workload. Staff are highly appreciative of this. Leaders think through new initiatives carefully before implementing them.

Trustees and members of the local academy committee (governing body) know the school well and hold leaders to account, for example through trust-wide reviews. Leaders contribute to the trust-wide approach to raising standards by supporting other academies in the trust.

In discussion with the headteacher, inspectors agreed that adaptations to curriculum planning and assessment in science may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils who need early help or who are at risk of abuse are clearly identified. The school is quick to respond to incidents as they arise. They seek professional advice when required and make referrals in a timely way. Regular fortnightly briefings reinforce key messages around, for example, online safety and child sexual exploitation. Staff are well trained. Leaders and governors manage appointments and responses to allegations against staff well. There is a culture where pupils do not have to tolerate bullying, abuse or derogatory language.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not explicitly set out how the curriculum is adapted for pupils with SEND in science. In lessons visited during the inspection, there were examples of teachers and additional staff making adaptations, but they were not consistent. As a result, a small number of pupils struggled with their work. Leaders should ensure that adaptations to the curriculum are achieved consistently.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2016.

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	139043
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10200305
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	1,071
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Patricia Beanland
Principal	Kully Uppal
Website	www.bristnallhallacademy.atrust.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	1 and 2 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current principal was appointed in September 2019.
- The chair of the local academy committee (the LAC) was appointed in March 2020.
- At the time of the inspection, there were 13 pupils on the roll of the school in three registered providers of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, other senior leaders, the coordinator for SEND and other members of staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils. They met the chair of the LAC and the chair and vice chair of the Academy Transformation Trust. They also met other senior staff of the trust.

- Inspectors took account of 38 responses to the Ofsted Parent View free-text service and 42 responses to the online questionnaire. There were 37 responses to the Ofsted pupil questionnaire and 50 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered information on behaviour, attendance, personal development, safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors focused deeply on science, geography and modern foreign languages. They visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to subject leaders, teachers and pupils.

Inspection team

Mark Sims, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sal Yunus

Ofsted Inspector

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