

Inspection of a good school: George Salter Academy

Davey Road, West Bromwich, West Midlands B70 9UW

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 May 2023

Outcome

George Salter Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and students value the way school life is about much more than lessons. Most enjoy being in school and are keen to meet the high expectations staff have of their behaviour, learning and personal development. Pupils are achieving increasingly better outcomes.

There is a calm atmosphere in lessons and almost all pupils happily focus on their learning activities. At social times, and as they move around the school, pupils manage themselves well. As one pupil put it, 'most people get it right most of the time'.

Pupils value diversity and embrace the school's ethos of 'one world in one school'. They enjoyed sharing their own cultural backgrounds on 'culture day'. Pupils say they encounter little discriminatory language, but if it does occur, staff deal with it promptly.

Through the Salter Scholar programme, all pupils access an impressive range of opportunities which support their character development. These include trips and visits, inspirational speakers and supporting the local community. For example, student sports leaders help to run a netball tournament for key stage 2 pupils from local primary schools. Pupils graduate from the Salter Scholar programme by completing activities linked to key character traits. Many pupils proudly achieve this.

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

School and trust leaders have worked hard to improve the areas identified in the school's previous inspection. This has resulted in stronger outcomes for pupils.

Leaders aim to 'defy disadvantage' and address any barriers pupils may face. This underpins both the curriculum and the personal development offer. The curriculum has been carefully mapped from Years 7 to 13 and enables pupils to acquire and deepen their learning over time. Leaders have made sure that teachers are clear about the key knowledge and important skills pupils will need to be successful. They have also identified

ways for pupils to develop their vocabulary and oracy skills. Leaders have built greater diversity into the curriculum, through the books pupils read in English or the artists that they study.

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to help pupils makes sense of new concepts and ideas. They regularly check that pupils have understood their learning. This helps teachers to identify what needs to be revisited in a later lesson. Pupils know how to improve their work because of the quality of the feedback they receive. Leaders are already addressing any inconsistency in delivery of the planned curriculum, providing support for teachers from practitioners within the multi-academy trust.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Staff know how to identify any specific needs a pupil may have, and leaders ensure that these needs are carefully assessed and met. Leaders have improved the quality of the 'pupil passports', which contain strategies to support the learning and development of pupils with SEND. Most staff use these well to adapt learning in their lessons, but this is not always the case. Despite this, many parents and carers of pupils with SEND praise the support their child receives.

Leaders want to improve the reading skills of pupils, especially those who find it more difficult. They encourage an enjoyment of reading among all pupils. They have implemented a multi-layered reading strategy which includes support for weaker readers and reading sessions in tutor time. However, some parts of the strategy are not as effective as they could be. It is taking some pupils too long to become fluent readers.

Pupils understand leaders' expectations of behaviour and almost all meet these. There has been some reduction in the number of times leaders need to apply the most serious consequences for unacceptable behaviour. Leaders have introduced a 'focus' behaviour intervention programme for younger pupils that is helping to reduce the number of pupils who repeatedly behave inappropriately.

The school's work to support pupils' personal development is commendable. Through the carefully mapped personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum, alongside assemblies and tutor time, pupils learn about wider British society and being a good citizen. They have the opportunity to gain leadership qualifications as part of the Salter Scholar programme. The school's strong careers programme supports pupils in making the best decisions about their future. Year 11 pupils and sixth formers are well prepared for their next steps. This is reflected in the impressive numbers of pupils who successfully move on to education or employment when they leave.

Staff feel valued and appreciate the quality of the professional development they receive. There has been some work by leaders to reduce staff workload and this remains an ongoing priority.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a real culture of safeguarding at the school. Everyone knows the role that they play in helping to keep pupils safe. Staff record any concern they have about a pupil and leaders take swift action in response. When necessary, leaders go above and beyond in securing the help or support those pupils or families may need.

Leaders carry out appropriate checks on the adults who come to work in the school.

Pupils and students learn to keep themselves safe through their PSHE lessons and assemblies. These are mapped in a way that means pupils learn about and revisit issues, including consent and online safety, in an age-appropriate way.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have identified appropriate strategies to support pupils with SEND to access their learning. However, teachers do not consistently use these strategies across the curriculum. This means that some pupils with SEND are not making the progress they could in all subjects. Leaders should ensure that all teachers are confident in using these strategies to adapt learning in their lessons.
- The reading strategy is in the early stages of implementation. Leaders are not monitoring its delivery closely enough to identify ways in which it could be improved. This means that some pupils are not improving their reading quickly enough. Leaders should evaluate each part of the strategy more carefully so that they have a clear understanding of the actions required to maximise its impact on pupils' reading.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2017.

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](#)' 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	135234
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10240390
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,414
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	190
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julius Weinberg
Principal	Adrian Price
Website	www.georgesalter.com
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal has taken up post since the previous inspection.
- The school is part of Ormiston Academies Trust, which comprises 43 academies.
- Leaders make use of five 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 qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors focused on the following subjects: English, art and design, mathematics and modern languages. Inspectors examined leaders' curriculum plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, the curriculum and improvement planning. The school website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised safeguarding records. They also looked at how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors visited tutor times. They also observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors met with the principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They met with the trust education director and two local governors. They spoke to a trustee. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

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