

Inspection of Heworth Grange School

High Lanes, Felling, Gateshead NE10 0PT

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 April 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Heworth Grange School is on a journey of transformation. Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in leadership at all levels. Leaders from the trust are driving improvement with integrity. The majority of pupils talk positively about the changes they are seeing in school. However, despite improvements, behaviour is not always good, particularly at break- and lunchtimes. Some pupils still do not make the right choices and are boisterous. Not all teachers challenge this behaviour consistently.

Leaders are focused on building a respectful culture and have prioritised messages around bullying. Pupils can explain what bullying is and how they should report it. Pupils say that they have trusted adults in school whom they could turn to. However, some pupils feel that bullying is not always dealt with effectively. Logs show, and pupils agree, that teachers do take action. However, this does not always stop the bullying quickly enough. Pupils feel that some staff take bullying more seriously than others.

Leaders have an accurate view of school priorities. They are passionate about driving improvement and change. They are invested in the academic success of all their pupils. Many pupils are beginning to share in these positive attitudes towards their learning. However, leaders' rising expectations of what pupils can achieve are not currently fully evident in all classrooms.

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

Leaders have prioritised the curriculum in their school improvement plans. Curriculum leaders have received training in how to design a curriculum effectively. Leaders have thought about what knowledge they want pupils to learn and how it builds over time. Leaders do this with more precision in some subjects than in others. In addition, some teachers do not routinely check what all pupils understand. This means that gaps in learning are sometimes not picked up quickly. Some teachers question pupils effectively. Sometimes the questions that teachers ask do not help pupils to refine their understanding or to deepen their thinking. Some activities in lessons do not help pupils learn the curriculum quickly enough.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving. There is a conviction from leaders that pupils with SEND will achieve their potential. In some subjects, such as history and English, inspectors saw evidence of pupils' needs being met. This is not the case across the whole curriculum, however. Pupils with SEND explain that some teachers support them effectively in lessons. They talk positively about the 'pitstop' provision and support from the SEND team.

Older pupils explain that behaviour is getting better. Year 7 pupils describe the school as 'friendly'. Nevertheless, some lessons are disrupted by the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils. Teachers have different expectations for pupils' behaviour.

Consequences for poor behaviour are clear. The 'warnings' system is understood by pupils, but not all teachers use the system consistently.

Leaders monitor the behaviour of pupils closely. When leaders see patterns of concern, they act quickly. The number of suspensions is reducing. When pupils misbehave more frequently, leaders have systems in place to support them. However, some pupils' behaviour is not improving rapidly enough.

Leaders have prioritised the introduction of a new curriculum focused on pupils' personal development. Older pupils feel that they receive clear messages around consent and sexual harassment, for example. However, this new curriculum is still being developed. Some pupils have not been taught the full range of topics that would prepare them for life in modern Britain. The vast majority of pupils agree that they are taught to respect others and that people are treated equally in school. When incidents of discriminatory language have occurred, leaders have taken decisive action to educate pupils and address the issue. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities available to them, including creative writing, cooking, music, magic and a wide range of sports. These clubs are well attended and valued by pupils. Parents and carers appreciate the visits and trips the school has been able to offer recently, including to the Royal Northern College of Music and the Birmingham Computing Convention.

Leaders have implemented a robust careers provision for pupils from Year 7 to Year 11. Leaders were creative in how they devised opportunities for pupils to interact virtually with employers during the second period of national COVID-19 restrictions. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND receive additional guidance to ensure that they are as well prepared as possible to take their next steps. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Leaders are very clear about what the school still needs to do to improve. Leaders and staff are ambitious for the school. They all want it to continue to improve. The majority of staff feel supported by leaders during this time of transition. Leaders need to ensure that monitoring processes are sharply focused on improving the inconsistencies that remain around teaching and behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders responsible for safeguarding are clear about the importance of educating pupils about how to keep themselves safe. Staff deliver clear messages to pupils around bullying, risks in the local area and how to keep themselves safe when online.

Leaders have made staffing decisions to ensure that there is enough capacity to manage caseloads.

The members of the safeguarding team work closely together, providing supervision and support for each other. There are social workers on site to support pupils who are having difficulties. Leaders also work closely with external agencies and families to ensure that they access the right help.

Leaders keep accurate logs of actions taken to keep pupils safe. Logs show that those actions are timely and appropriate.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not routinely check what pupils know and remember in class. They do not use questioning effectively to uncover gaps in learning. This means that some pupils are not able to build on prior learning. Leaders must ensure that the way in which the curriculum is delivered allows teachers to identify what pupils do not know and that they adapt their questions and plans accordingly.
- In some subjects, assessment is not closely aligned to the new curriculum. This means that teachers are not able to check how much pupils have learned. Leaders must ensure that new assessment systems are implemented that allow teachers to check pupils' learning accurately to inform future planning.
- There is inconsistency in staff expectations of behaviour and the application of the behaviour policy across the school. This leads to mixed messages around expectations for some pupils. This also causes some negative perceptions around fairness. Leaders must urgently ensure that the behaviour policy is applied consistently to establish high standards of behaviour for all pupils.
- Not all leaders are effectively monitoring the new processes and systems that have been introduced. This means that some systems are not embedded securely enough to have a clear impact. Leaders should refine their quality assurance processes to ensure that systems are having a significant impact.

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	145490
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10227645
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,067
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chief executive of trust	David Clayton
Headteacher	Allie Denholm
Website	www.heworthgrange.org
Date of previous inspection	14 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Heworth Grange School converted to become an academy school in February 2018 when it joined Consilium Academies Trust. When its predecessor school, Heworth Grange School, was last inspected by Ofsted under section 5 of the Education Act 2005, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school uses four registered alternative providers: Beacon of Light School; River Tyne Academy; Hopespring; and Gateshead Learning and Skills.
- The school and the trust have undergone significant changes in leadership since the previous inspection. The new headteacher took up post in June 2020.
- The school no longer has a sixth-form provision.

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 had 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 spoke with representatives from Consilium Academies Trust, including the chief executive officer (CEO), deputy CEO and director of education. An inspector also spoke with an external school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history, science and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders responsible for reading and disadvantaged pupils. They also listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator. They looked at a range of documentation, including education, health and care plans and pupil passports. Inspectors also met with pupils with SEND about the support they receive and spoke to parents of pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for safeguarding. They looked at logs of actions taken by leaders to keep pupils safe. They looked at bullying logs and logs of peer-on-peer abuse. Inspectors scrutinised the single central record. They also checked documents relating to safe recruitment.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour. They looked at information about suspensions, exclusions and attendance. They spoke with pupils who had been suspended about their experiences.
- Inspectors spoke with alternative providers by phone. They observed the behaviour of pupils at break- and lunchtime. They spoke with a wide range of pupils, formally and informally, during the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders responsible for personal development and careers. They looked at curriculum planning for personal, social and health education and relationships education.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of teaching and support staff, formally and informally, during the inspection.
- Inspectors also scrutinised a range of documents including: the school self-evaluation, the school development plan, minutes of school improvement board meetings and fire alarm logs.
- Inspectors considered the 78 responses to the pupil survey and the 62 responses to the staff survey. They also considered the 62 free-text responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

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