

Inspection of Quest Academy

Anderson Avenue, Rugby, Warwickshire CV22 5PE

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Everything that happens at Quest Academy helps pupils to be ready to learn and to be 'ready for life'. This results in tangible benefits, both personal and academic, for all pupils. Pupils are very well supported to help develop their self-confidence and self-belief. The pupils spoken to told inspectors how much better they are doing at this school. One pupil summed this up by saying, 'I feel good about the future.' Parents and carers wholeheartedly agree with this view.

The school rules, be ready, be respectful, be safe, are reinforced daily. Staff model the high expectations that they have for pupils' behaviour. Pupils are well supported to learn to manage their own behaviour. Many pupils are highly motivated by the school's reward system. They aim to reach 'diamond' status on a weekly basis.

Pupils feel safe in school and have trusted adults with whom they can talk. Incidents of bullying do occur from time to time, but leaders deal with them effectively.

All pupils benefit from an extensive range of opportunities to support their personal development. These include the 'ACE' (adventure, community and enterprise) curriculum and opportunities to showcase their achievements and talents at 'Questival'.

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

Leaders and governors have created a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. The curriculum combines academic subjects, personal development and preparation for life beyond school. Together, these aspects form a coherent and well-constructed programme.

Pupil's individual education, health and care plans provide leaders with a starting point for deciding what and how to teach. Each pupil follows a carefully sequenced and highly personalised plan. Leaders update and adapt these as pupils' needs develop and change. This approach is right and effective.

Staff nurture individual pupil's interests and talents, while addressing any gaps in their knowledge. Leaders use available funding well to support personalised learning. This includes access to music and language lessons and the provision of specialist equipment. Leaders also provide support for pupils' sensory needs. This is helping many pupils to manage their own behaviour better.

From their starting points, pupils achieve well. Pupils talk about what they have learned and can remember. Leaders assess all aspects of their pupils' learning and development. However, their approach to assessing pupils' progress in many academic subjects does not focus closely enough on what pupils have been taught. This does not help teachers to know what pupils need to learn next.

Teachers provide a positive mix of specialist and non-specialist teaching. Younger pupils enjoy having specialist teachers for some subjects, such as computing. Generally, teachers deliver the curriculum in ways that are meaningful and help pupils to remember the content. Teachers convey challenging content sensitively, for example when teaching about protected characteristics.

Leaders prioritise the promotion of reading and encourage pupils to read regularly. Lessons in all subjects have a strong focus on developing pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills. Over time, leaders have used a range of strategies to teach reading. As a result, there is not a single approach to the teaching of reading currently in use. This, along with an increased number of younger pupils attending school, means that not all pupils are learning to read as well as they could. Leaders are taking appropriate action to address this, but the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed developments.

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the curriculum. Over time, this work helps to prepare pupils well for their next stage in education. This includes appropriate careers advice, guidance and work experience opportunities.

The local advisory board and multi-academy board of trustees are proud of the school and its achievements. They work together constructively to hold leaders to account. Governors and trustees are knowledgeable about the school. They have a good understanding and oversight of their roles and functions.

Most staff feel well supported by leaders, for example to understand the curriculum and how best to deliver it. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and involve them in relevant school-wide decisions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Keeping pupils safe has a very high priority across the school. Staff know what to do when they have any safeguarding worries about a pupil. They are vigilant and well placed to identify when pupils may need help to keep safe. Leaders follow up all concerns tenaciously.

Staff from safeguarding, behavioural and therapy teams work together well. This is to ensure that pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, both in practical situations and when online, and to minimise any risk of exploitation.

Leaders complete all relevant checks to ensure that the adults in school are safe to work with pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- As the school has expanded, there are an increasing number of pupils at the early stages of learning to read. However, there is not a consistent or coherent phonics programme in place. Books are not well matched to these pupils' phonics knowledge. As a result, not all pupils in the early stages of learning to read are making as much progress as they could. While leaders have plans in place to address this, they need to ensure that the new phonics programme, and relevant staff training, are put in place as soon as possible.
- In many academic subjects, the school's current assessment system requires staff to assess pupils' progress against high level outcomes rather than what has been taught in individual lessons or sequences of work. This means that staff sometimes struggle to identify precisely what pupils need to learn next. Leaders are aware of this mismatch and have begun to devise an assessment system that focuses precisely on what has been taught. Leaders need to ensure that the work to strengthen the assessment system is completed and extended to all subject areas.

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	144764
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10212195
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Neil MacMillan
Principal	Nicola Wells
Website	www.thequestacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Quest Academy opened in September 2017. The school moved to its current premises in September 2019. The school is part of the MacIntyre Academies Trust.
- The school provides education for pupils between 7 and 16 years of age. There are no students in the sixth form. Pupils leave school at the end of Year 11.
- Quest Academy is a special school catering for pupils with a range of complex needs. These are mainly, but not exclusively, associated with an autistic spectrum disorder and/or social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All the pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision part-time. The school currently uses two alternative providers: New Meaning Warwickshire and The Dare2Dream Foundation.
- 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.

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 spoke to the principal, leaders, members of staff and pupils. The lead inspector spoke to three members of the local advisory board, including the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer for the multi-academy trust. An inspector spoke to some parents, either face to face or by telephone. An inspector also spoke to representatives of the two alternative providers that a small number of pupils attend part-time.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, science, computing and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with the subject leader, 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 met with leaders and looked at plans from a range of other curriculum areas, including mathematics, the creative curriculum and personalised learning.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders, governors and staff about the systems and actions they take to ensure that pupils are kept safe. They looked at policies and school records. Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed the relationships between pupils and adults.
- Inspectors also met with leaders and staff to find out about how well pupils' special educational needs are met, the wider curriculum, pastoral support and well-being.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and pupils and Ofsted's online survey for parents, Parent View. This included comments received via the free-text facility.

Inspection team

Catherine Crooks, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sandy Hayes

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