

Inspection of The George Eliot School

Raveloe Drive, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV11 4QP

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The George Eliot School welcomes everybody, and seeks to do the best for them. It places kindness alongside ambition in the values it promotes. Pupils refer to these values and, for example, hold doors open for each other. They feel safe. In part, this is because leaders have responded well to the impact of the pandemic. But they have also made it easy for pupils to report worries or concerns of any kind. There is a culture of mutual respect, and bullying is a rare event.

The principal leads the school with a clear vision and great energy. The staff wholeheartedly support her, and model the values that they wish the pupils to adopt.

Everyone who inspectors talked to said that the school has improved considerably since the last inspection, and the evidence supports this. Leaders have appointed the right staff and trained them well. They have established strong routines for behaviour and classroom organisation. At both key stages, pupils study a good range of subjects. Leaders have organised the curriculum effectively, and made appropriate changes to help pupils to catch up after lockdowns. There is an effective programme of careers education, and teachers often explain to pupils how learning relates to later life.

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

Pupils study a broad curriculum throughout key stage 3. At key stage 4, pupils are encouraged to continue with a range of subjects. Leaders have now resolved the staffing issue which temporarily restricted modern foreign languages. Subject leaders have planned learning that builds on what pupils can already do. The curriculum is ambitious, and ensures that work is appropriately challenging. Staff have used assessment effectively to identify any gaps in pupils' learning arising from the pandemic. As a result, pupils are learning well, gaining steadily in knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive specialist teaching that is well matched to their needs.

Teachers are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and greatly value the training that they receive. They explain ideas to pupils well. Teachers use the correct terminology for each subject, and expect pupils to do the same. They check on pupils' understanding in various ways, and use what they find out to shape the pace and direction of next steps in learning. The school promotes reading effectively. For example, pupils are keen to meet the '50 book challenge'.

During visits to lessons, inspectors observed no disruptive behaviour. Older pupils say that there is occasional poor behaviour in lower sets, but that teachers deal with it. In some classes, pupils' good conduct was more a response to the clear school rules and routines than an enjoyment of their learning. The overall rate of pupils'

attendance has returned to pre-pandemic levels and is improving slowly. The rate for older pupils and those who are disadvantaged remains a little lower.

Pupils learn about a full range of social topics. The school teaches them to respect and value different groups. Leaders have adopted innovative and effective strategies to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils in younger forms sit to eat their lunch as a 'family' with their tutors. They are encouraged to discuss relevant topics, and to give thanks for those who help them. Leaders have re-established a varied programme of extra-curricular activities. Pupils meet with senior staff and with directors of the trust, and believe that their views are heard and respected.

The principal's clear, determined leadership has won the respect of the staff. Leaders listen to people's views and adapt school practice accordingly. As a result, everyone works hard in the best interests of the pupils. A small number of subject leaders are not able to explain their curriculum decisions with the same clarity as their peers. The multi-academy trust (MAT) has supported the school well. For example, coordinating the planning of the curriculum across their four schools has contributed significantly to easing staff workload.

The school's career guidance meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. The school allows colleges and training providers the opportunity to discuss with pupils vocational career paths. The guidance is valued by pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe in school. Leaders are alert to the risks that pupils face, including those which have grown during the pandemic. They provide a wide-ranging programme that explains these risks well to staff and pupils. Staff respond to concerns about individuals with sensitivity and tenacity. Staff work well with other agencies involved in protecting children when the need arises.

Leaders make appropriate checks on those staff who join the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of departments, subject leaders are not able to explain fully how their curriculum ensures that pupils know more and remember more. Senior leaders should ensure that all subject leaders are in a strong position to evaluate and enhance the curriculum and its implementation as circumstances change.
- Improvements in pupils' conduct have relied on clear rules and routines both in the classroom and the playground. As leaders suggested, it is time to place more emphasis on pupils' responsibility to manage their own work and behaviour. This

will help them to be more responsible when outside the direct supervision of the school.

- A few key stage 4 pupils are yet to embrace the values of the school. Some of these pupils do not attend school regularly. Staff should work more intensively with these pupils and their families to ensure that they better understand the benefits to themselves and others of consistently good behaviour and attendance.

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	137079
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10201027
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	803
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Dunn
Principal	Homeira Zakary
Website	www.georgeeliot.midlandat.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 – 9 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The George Eliot School is one of four secondary schools that comprise the Midland Academies Trust MAT.
- The school provides full-time alternative provision for a small number of pupils at North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College, James Brindley Academy and Keresley College.

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 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff, including early career teachers, directors of

the MAT, and a representative of the school's raising achievement board (RAB), to which the MAT delegates oversight of some aspects of the school's work.

- Inspectors spoke with pupils at social times, and with groups of pupils more formally.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's procedures for recruiting and checking on staff. They also considered the effectiveness of staff training and the procedures to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' plans to improve the school, records of RAB meetings, and the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors met with a small number of parents and carers in person. The inspection team took account of the 86 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents. These included 48 narrative comments. Inspectors also considered 44 responses to the survey for staff, and 136 pupil questionnaires.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, humanities and technology. In these subjects, inspectors considered the school's curriculum plans, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors also met with pupils and with teachers to discuss learning in these subjects.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
David Hermitt	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Bassett	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021