

Inspection of Grasmere Academy

Grasmere Court, Killingworth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE12 6TS

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Grasmere Academy is a friendly and welcoming school. Pupils often join the school after transferring from other schools in the area. A number attend the specialist resource provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff make sure they gain a thorough understanding of individual pupils' needs as soon as possible. Staff strive relentlessly to find ways to improve pupils' lives, including through the delivery of the carefully planned curriculum. Pupils blossom in their attitudes towards learning and in developing self-confidence.

Relationships between the pupils and staff are very positive. Everyone has high expectations of behaviour. Pupils are courteous and polite. Pupils are enthusiastic about the behaviour reward system linked to prizes and they are keen to impress their teachers. Bullying is very rare and is dealt with effectively if it happens. This makes the pupils feel safe. Some staff members are trained in therapeutic techniques and offer specialist support. They help pupils to talk about their feelings and concerns. This enables pupils to fully focus on their learning.

The older pupils enjoy being 'Grasmere Guardians', acting as role models for younger pupils in school. Pupils also relish being members of the school parliament.

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

The number of pupils attending Grasmere Academy who have previously attended other schools in the area has increased significantly in recent years. Some pupils have gaps in their learning from studying a different curriculum. Leaders have reorganised the curriculum and school staffing to address the gaps. This means some subject curriculums have been refined or are quite new. Staff are highly skilled in crafting relationships and pupils new to school settle in quickly.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. A new scheme has been introduced to make sure the teaching of phonics is well structured and consistent throughout school. Teachers frequently check what pupils know and use this information to plan the exact next step that pupils need to learn. When they are ready, pupils read decodable books linked to the phonics scheme. Rich class texts are chosen so that they can be studied in some detail. Pupils express their love of reading. They enjoy the wide choice of books available.

In mathematics, history and physical education, curriculum leaders clearly set out what they want pupils to learn. Teachers are adept at presenting information in a way that pupils understand. Pupils confidently recall learning from previous topics. Pupils understand how their new learning connects with what they already know. However, there are some inconsistencies in the way in which the curriculum is delivered. Teachers sometimes choose learning activities that do not exactly match the curriculum end points. The curriculum is planned for single-year groups but there are some mixed-age classes. This can lead to gaps in learning for some pupils.

Staff have the highest expectations for pupils with SEND. The leadership and management of SEND is a strength. Leaders ensure that every avenue of support is available to help pupils. Many pupils have complex needs. Staff help pupils overcome significant challenges so that they experience success in their learning. Individual plans for pupils are carefully written, and targets are broken down into small achievable steps. Leaders work continuously with external agencies and parents and carers.

There is a consistent approach to behaviour management across school. Staff really understand pupils and their individual needs. Pupils behave well. They are respectful and supportive of each other. Leaders do all that they can to promote pupils' good attendance. Attendance is improving.

Leaders include careers information in the curriculum and celebrate National Careers Week. Pupils learn about economic well-being and they understand the value of money. Leaders plan trips and invite visitors into school to provide experiences that many pupils may not normally receive. Pupils have some understanding of fundamental British values and protected characteristics. Leaders are aware that the religious education (RE) curriculum is not yet as memorable as they would like it to be. As a result, some pupils have difficulty recalling basic facts about the six major world religions, including where people might worship.

In early years, staff focus on developing children's communication skills. They model spoken language well and engage children in conversation and play. Staff take children on walks to the local park, to enrich their experience of the world. Parents attend workshops to help them support their child in learning to read.

The members of the governing body have a good understanding of their role. They have a high profile in school and actively challenge and support senior leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know their pupils well and are quick to identify any changes in behaviour that may indicate a safeguarding concern. Leaders make an effective response to any pupil who is at risk of harm. Leaders challenge external partners to ensure that the safeguarding needs of the pupils are met without delay.

Safeguarding is woven through the curriculum. Pupils learn how to assess risk and to keep themselves safe. This includes online and real-life situations reflecting the dangers faced locally. Leaders prioritise safeguarding when recruiting staff. They ensure that staff are well trained.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not adapted well enough to teach all of the stated school curriculum content in sufficient depth to the mixed-ages classes in the school. This means that some pupils have gaps in their learning and this has an impact on their readiness for their next stage of education. Leaders should review the curriculum planning to ensure that all pupils access the ambitious school curriculum and no gaps in knowledge occur.
- The previous RE curriculum lacked sufficient detail and ambition. As a result, pupils have a limited understanding of the religions they have studied. Leaders should fully implement the new RE curriculum and ensure that this is embedded in the school.

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	138576
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10241995
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	110
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Lynn Goossens
Headteacher	Kerry Lilico
Website	www.grasmereacademy.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school has a specialist resource provision for pupils in key stage 2 with moderate learning difficulties.
- Both the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator have taken up their posts since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, early years leader, and the special educational needs coordinator and met with representatives of the local governing body and the chair of the trust board. The lead inspector met with the local authority education adviser who supports the school.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, 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 documentation for these and other subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspectors scrutinised the single central record and reviewed safeguarding paperwork and systems. The inspectors spoke to leaders, teachers, support staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lesley Sullivan

His Majesty's Inspector

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