

# Inspection of a good school: The Pedmore High School

Grange Lane, Pedmore, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY9 7HS

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Inspection dates:

14 and 15 February 2023

## Outcome

The Pedmore High School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pedmore High School is a welcoming and inclusive school. It lives by its values of 'aspire, persevere and succeed' in everything it does. Pupils enjoy attending school. They told inspectors that they feel happy and safe here. This is a small, caring school where staff take the time to get to know pupils well. Staff care about their well-being.

Pupils are respectful and tolerant of people's differences. Everyone feels that they can be an individual here. Pupils behave very well in lessons and move calmly around the school site. They enjoy being part of this harmonious school. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils are warm and considerate.

Leaders have high ambitions for what pupils can achieve and help them to develop into well-rounded individuals. Pupils know that staff care for them, and they appreciate the help and support they get from their teachers and pastoral staff. There are many clubs and enrichment opportunities on offer. Many pupils are also involved in different ways in the annual school production, which this year is 'Annie'.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They all have a trusted adult to go to if they are worried or upset. Pupils told inspectors that instances of bullying and discriminatory language are rare. When they do happen, they have confidence in the ability of their teachers to sort them out quickly and effectively.

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

School and trust leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the quality of education that pupils receive. Leaders have made a considerable number of improvements to the curriculum. For example, changes to the key stage 3 curriculum mean that pupils study their subjects for longer and develop greater depth in their knowledge and understanding. However, at times, some pupils cannot always recall previous important learning. In some subjects, including geography, their knowledge is less secure. This is because the previous curriculum did not always develop pupils' knowledge deeply enough.

Subject leaders have thought carefully about the order in which pupils learn the knowledge and skills that they need. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use their expertise to deliver lessons with clarity and confidence. Leaders ensure that staff make effective use of assessment strategies. This helps teachers to spot any pupils' misconceptions or difficulties so that they can address them quickly.

The proportion of pupils at key stage 4 who choose subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate (the combination of academic subjects that help to keep pupils' options open for further study) is much lower than the government's ambition. Lower proportions of pupils choose to continue studying a modern foreign language in key stage 4. In part, this has been due to difficulties leaders have faced in recruiting modern foreign languages teachers. Leaders have robust plans in place to increase the numbers of pupils who will study languages at GCSE.

Staff identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Teachers receive high-quality training to support pupils with SEND in the classroom. This enables teachers to adapt their teaching activities to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND benefit from the same broad and ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Leaders have prioritised reading in the school. They realise that fluency in reading enables pupils to achieve well in other subjects. Staff work effectively together to identify weaker readers and help them to catch up with their peers. The school, along with the trust, has invested significant resources to develop reading intervention programmes so that pupils can read for pleasure and for meaning. Pupils, even those who are more reluctant, know how important reading is to help them in all their subjects.

Pupils behave extremely well and have very positive attitudes to their learning. Instances of low-level disruption are rare. This is because leaders have set very high expectations for pupils' conduct. The strong focus on rewards and restorative practices promotes positive and productive relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils care about being seen as strong ambassadors for the school.

The school's provision to develop pupils' wider development is a strength. Leaders have constructed an effective curriculum that teaches pupils about a range of important issues, such as healthy relationships, consent and how to stay safe in the community and on the internet. The school's inclusive nature means that pupils respect different cultures, beliefs and characteristics.

Staff are extremely proud to work at Pedmore High School. Very few teachers leave the school. They value the ways in which governors, the trust and school leaders care about their well-being and workload. There is a strong sense of collegiality and moral purpose among the staff.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is a priority. Staff receive timely and appropriate safeguarding training. This means that staff are kept up to date with any specific challenges and dangers that pupils may face.

Staff are extremely vigilant to signs that indicate that pupils may be at risk of neglect or harm. They report any safeguarding concerns in a timely manner. Leaders act on these concerns swiftly. Staff work with a range of outside agencies to support pupils' safety, well-being and mental health.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to assess risks and keep themselves safe, including when online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The curriculum changes at key stage 3 are relatively new and the impact is yet to be fully seen. Consequently, pupils' knowledge lacks depth in some subjects. Leaders should evaluate curriculum changes to ensure that teachers develop pupils' knowledge and understanding further.
- There is a low take-up of pupils studying a modern foreign language at key stage 4. This means that too few pupils choose to study the range of academic subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate. Leaders should continue their efforts to promote modern foreign languages to ensure that more pupils in key stage 4 take up the opportunity to study a modern foreign language.

## **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 predecessor school, Pedmore Technology College and Community School, to be good in January 2016.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145593
<b>Local authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256957
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	611
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	6
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Robert Evans
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gareth Lloyd
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.pedmore-highschool.co.uk">www.pedmore-highschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school joined the Invictus Academies Trust in September 2018.
- The school uses four registered alternative providers.
- A small number of students attend the Invictus Trust sixth form.

## 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 held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and curriculum leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and geography. The lead inspector also looked at additional lessons on day two. For each

deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and examined the school's safeguarding records. Inspectors also spoke with a range of staff and pupils about safeguarding.

### **Inspection team**

Neil Warner, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mark Feldman

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
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