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Principal: Lara Hall

13 December 2021

Dear

OFSTED REPORT – THE NUNEATON ACADEMY

Ofsted has now published its report on the inspection of Nuneaton Academy on 22-23 September 2021. We are pleased that positive aspects of the school's provision have been recognised but disappointed with the overall judgement that the school is 'Inadequate' and do not believe that this reflects the true picture of pupils' experience at our school.

Despite our disagreement with the overall judgement, we are extremely pleased that inspectors found no issues with behaviour or bullying at the school and said that pupils 'feel safe' and 'learn extensively about digital safety'. The report notes that pupils 'behave in lessons and listen respectfully.' This is a testament to the culture of kindness, empathy, and tolerance that we have fostered in the school, and the support of our teachers and parents in reinforcing these values.

We are also really pleased that Ofsted recognised that personal development at the school is seen as a strength and judged to be good, and that our pupils consistently develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed.

We welcome Ofsted's comments that, "Leaders are ambitious for the school and the community it serves. Pupils develop the personal skills and knowledge they need to be successful. They learn how to stay safe, look after their own well-being and be respectful. They are well prepared to make informed decisions about their future."

However, it is our firm belief that the Ofsted inspectors did not take sufficient account of the impact of the pandemic on the school which you will know to have been significant, and that the overall judgement was inappropriate. Media reports indicate that this issue has been reported by other schools around the UK. We have raised a complaint about the outcome through the relevant channels, and Ofsted has upheld some of our objections to the way in which the inspection was carried out. We are now exploring further routes to challenge the judgement and will keep you informed of our progress.

We know that parents have been extremely supportive of the efforts we have made over the last 20 months to minimise the impact of the pandemic on our pupils' learning experiences. We made a robust response in the face of lockdown restrictions including through the provision of online learning, and your feedback has been universally positive. We have been working hard since the start of the pandemic to put in place alternative ways of learning and have since been helping pupils to catch up.

While we will continue to challenge the overall inspection judgement, we will address the feedback from inspectors relating to the curriculum and continue the journey we have already started towards improving the learning experience, on which we have already made considerable progress.

The most recent published data on Progress 8 measures indicates that Nuneaton Academy was the second most improved school in Warwickshire. Teacher assessed grades have shown an improving trend since the last published data, which has led to more than 99 per cent of pupils securing a place in further education, training, or employment when they leave us in Year 11.

Our plans to build on the progress we are already making include:

- Further work on reading skills including promoting a love of reading.
- Continuing to ensure pupils receive the very best delivery in our classrooms from highly trained subject experts
- Increasing our work across our SEND provision to further support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities following a significantly turbulent 20 months in education.

We enjoy the support of our whole school community and there is high demand for places in Year 7. We are fortunate in our stable team of specialist subject teachers who work hard and energetically to ensure that they deliver the best curriculum to our pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

While the impact of the pandemic cannot be underestimated, we have worked tirelessly over the last two years to support pupils to keep on track with their learning and to support their personal development. Please be assured of our continuing dedication to the improvement of your son's or daughter's learning experience and our commitment to addressing the concerns raised by Ofsted in their report.

We would like to invite you to a parents' meeting in school on **Wednesday, 15 December 2021** from 5.30pm – 6.30pm to discuss the Ofsted outcome and answer your questions. Alternatively, if you would like to meet with me to discuss any aspect of the report, please contact my office on 02476 341 134. Thank you for your continuing support for Nuneaton Academy.

Yours sincerely,

Lara Hall
Principal

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11 November 2021

Lara Hall
Principal
The Nuneaton Academy
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Warwickshire
CV10 7PD

Dear Mrs Hall

Final inspection report

The Nuneaton Academy

Following your recent inspection, we are pleased to share with you the final version of your inspection report. We will usually publish the report eight working days from the date of this letter on the [Ofsted reports website](#).

Thank you for the comments and information submitted following your review of the draft report. I have considered all the points raised and have made necessary amendments to the report to resolve the factual inaccuracies you highlighted.

You raised concerns about the judgements awarded, including the information gathered by the inspection team in respect of the quality of education judgement and behaviour and attitudes judgement. I can confirm that the inspection evidence shows that judgements were made using all elements of the deep dive methodology in relation to the quality of education. Inspectors used the full range of evidence to identify what was systemic. This evidence is correctly reflected in the inspection judgements and in the text of the inspection report. I have made some minor adjustments based on your comments to clarify some of the points in the report. Thank you for you raising these concerns.

I can also confirm that your comments have been shared with my line manager for discussion as part of our normal process of improving inspection practice.

I regret that aspects of the report and inspection gave you cause for concern and I hope that this response has helped to clarify matters.

You are required to distribute a copy of the report to the registered parents of all registered pupils. This includes any registered parent who may not be living with the child and includes pupils who do not currently attend school but are still on the

school's roll, for example due to sick leave or temporary exclusion. The school must distribute the report to parents within five working days from the date of this letter.¹

If you experience any difficulties accessing the report on the Ofsted website, please contact us – the inspection support administrator listed below is your best point of contact.

If you are dissatisfied with your inspection report or the inspection process, you may submit a formal complaint using the form on the [Ofsted website](#). You should submit any complaint by the end of the fifth working day from the date of this letter.

Post-inspection survey

We invite you to complete our short post-inspection survey on the [provider portal](#) with your views on the inspection process. This includes your views on the impact the inspection is likely to have in bringing about improvement to your provision. By responding to this survey, you will help Ofsted improve the inspection process.

Yours sincerely

Ian Tustian HMI
Lead Inspector

Reply to:
Jonathan Hillier
Inspection Support Administrator
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¹ This is required under the Education Act 2005 section 14(4)(c) in relation to maintained schools and section 16(3)(c) for academies, free schools and non-maintained special schools. Regulation six of The Education (School Inspection) (England) Regulations 2005 states that the governing body must take 'such steps as are reasonably practicable' to ensure that the registered parents receive the report within five working days.

Inspection of The Nuneaton Academy

Radnor Drive, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV10 7PD

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils do not learn the curriculum well enough. Too often they do not fully understand what they have been taught. Leaders want pupils to learn the curriculum well. This is yet to happen effectively.

Leaders are ambitious for the school and the community it serves. Pupils develop the personal skills and knowledge they need to be successful. They learn how to stay safe, look after their own well-being and be respectful. They are well prepared to make informed decisions about their future.

Pupils reported that bullying in school is infrequent. They say that when it does occur, staff deal with it appropriately. Pupils report that staff do not tolerate inappropriate language, such as homophobic language, if they hear it.

Most lessons are calm and orderly. Pupils behave in lessons and listen respectfully to staff and to each other. Staff and pupils understand the systems for dealing with poor behaviour. These have helped to improve behaviour. However, these systems can mean pupils miss out on lesson time and they do not routinely catch up on missed learning.

Pupils feel safe in school. Pupils told inspectors that during social times, others generally behave well, although there are some instances of poor behaviour. Many pupils attend the wide range of enrichment activities on offer.

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

Staff do not implement the curriculum effectively. Leaders from across the multi-academy trust have considered what pupils should learn in subjects. Curriculum plans are sequenced well. However, there is a disconnect between these plans and what pupils experience in lessons. Teachers often move onto new learning before pupils have a secure understanding of what they have learned before. Pupils do not have the building blocks in place to grasp new learning. Teachers do not identify these gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge readily enough. This means that pupils are not learning the intended curriculum. Instead, they are often simply trying to remember a series of disconnected facts.

Leaders expect teachers to use a range of strategies to support pupils in lessons. However, in many instances, these hinder learning. For instance, pupils often resort to simply waiting for, and then copying down answers without understanding the context, vocabulary or meaning. This means that pupils are not learning how to study effectively or overcome stumbling blocks as they learn.

Leaders have plans in place to promote reading across the school, but these have yet to inspire pupils to read regularly or for pleasure. Staff read to pupils in tutor time, but pupils do not have the background knowledge to appreciate the texts and so do not see this as valuable.

Leaders expect pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn the same curriculum as other pupils. However, teachers do not consistently meet the needs of pupils with SEND in lessons so that they learn well. In too many instances, pupils with SEND are removed from lessons because of their behaviour. As a result, pupils miss out on important aspects of the curriculum and the support from an expert teacher. There is a similar negative pattern for disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils participate in a range of activities and clubs. Leaders track pupils' attendance at these and actively encourage other pupils to attend. Leaders rightly see the school as an integral part of the wider community. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum has been thoughtfully constructed. Pupils learn about the right things at the right time. For instance, pupils learn extensively about digital safety in Year 8 PSHE lessons. Pupils receive timely information about careers and further education. This means that they are well prepared for their next steps.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are trained well to know the possible signs that indicate a pupil is at risk. They know the systems for reporting these and the need to report any concern, no matter how small.

Leaders work with external agencies well to keep pupils safe. They are working hard to continue to strengthen links with families. Staff know pupils well. Pastoral systems support the safeguarding work of leaders and this is effective.

Leaders have recognised the potential risks to pupils in relation to online sexual abuse. They are raising awareness of this issue effectively with staff and pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils are not learning the planned curriculum well enough. Their experiences in many lessons do not adequately enable them to develop their knowledge. Teachers do not sharply check that pupils have the fundamental building blocks in place. Hence, pupils' understanding is frequently shallow. This leaves them ill-equipped to cope with the demands of the curriculum. Leaders must urgently tackle this disconnection so that pupils remember the content they have been taught, linking new knowledge to what they already know.
- Teachers' professional development has lacked subject specificity. As a result, they are overly reliant on general pedagogical techniques that often lead to pupils trying to learn a series of disconnected facts. As a result, pupils' understanding is often disjointed. Leaders should make sure that teachers and staff are well trained to deliver the planned curriculum effectively.

- Leaders do not support disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND well enough. Leaders expect staff to adapt their classroom practice so that pupils with SEND learn the curriculum and disadvantaged pupils engage in lessons. This is not yet happening well. Too many disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are removed from lessons due to their behaviour, hence missing out on valuable teacher expertise. Leaders must make sure that teachers understand how to help these pupils so that they learn and behave well.
- Leaders have been too slow to prioritise reading. Detailed plans are now in place. However, many pupils do not enjoy reading and too few read for pleasure. Leaders must act to make sure that reading permeates all aspects of school life and that pupils develop a love of reading, so that they read widely and often.

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	136158
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10201023
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	858
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Dunn
Principal	Lara Hall
Website	https://nuneatonacademy.midlandat.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	19 and 20 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- In September 2020, a new school principal was appointed.
- The Nuneaton Academy is one of four secondary schools that comprise The Midland Academies Trust.
- The school makes use of two registered alternative providers for a very small number of pupils.

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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the principal and other leaders. They held discussions with teachers, members of the raising achievement board and the trustees of the multi-academy trust, including the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, art, geography, history, and modern foreign languages. For each of these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, carried out visits to lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at some of their work.
- Inspectors attended an assembly and visited tutor time.
- Inspectors met with members of staff individually and in groups, and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection. Inspectors also took account of responses to pupil and staff surveys, as well as Ofsted Parent View.
- An inspector spoke with staff at an alternative provision.
- Inspectors looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with the designated safeguarding lead.

Inspection team

Ian Tustian, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Sal Yunus	Ofsted Inspector
Herminder Channa	Ofsted Inspector

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