

Inspection of George Dixon Academy

Portland Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, West Midlands B16 9GD

Inspection dates: 17 December 2024 and 14 January 2025

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

The headteacher of this school is Tutvinder Mann. George Dixon Academy is a single-academy trust. The school is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sir Robert Dowling.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils chat happily as they move around the bustling corridors to the 'sound of the week'. They told inspectors that each week, they learn about the heritage of a piece of music as a celebration of the differences between people. Pupils of all ages, including sixth-form students, mix well together.

The school is passionate about ensuring that pupils develop into confident young people, fully prepared for life in modern Britain. The wider curriculum is underpinned by a strong sense of equality and diversity. From articles in 'The Dixonian' to the eclectic range of visiting speakers, the school is deeply committed to ensuring that pupils learn the importance of tolerance and acceptance, irrespective of their faith, culture or background.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and during social times. They are respectful of the environment and of staff. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong.

The school has taken judicious steps to increase the ambition in the curriculum. Staff have raised their expectations for all pupils' success, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are learning more deeply than they have in the past. Nevertheless, it is too early to see the impact of this work on pupils' achievement. By the end of key stage 4, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. In contrast, students in the sixth form achieve well.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school and trustees share a much clearer vision for a high-quality education. To this end, the school is determined to provide a rich curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge and addresses social disadvantage. Support for disadvantaged pupils is at the heart of the school's work.

Following the redesign of the curriculum, including in the sixth form, teachers are fully versed in the knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which this content should be taught. This is helping pupils, particularly those in key stage 3, to build a secure body of subject knowledge. Much thought has also been given to how the delivery of the curriculum should be adapted so that pupils with SEND can learn well.

For the most part, teachers have strong subject knowledge, and their methods of curriculum delivery are appropriate. In many lessons, pupils try hard to use subject-specific vocabulary, applying what they know to more sophisticated ideas. Typically, alongside their academic accolades, students in the sixth form develop independence and a vast array of study skills. This stands them in good stead for life beyond school.

The school's work to enhance the effectiveness of its assessment systems is at an earlier stage. Some teachers do not identify pupils' misconceptions sufficiently well, while others move on to new learning before pupils are ready. Equally, on occasion, teachers in the sixth form miss opportunities to check how deeply students are learning. Some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge as a result.

The school's approaches to identifying pupils' additional needs have been considerably strengthened. Teachers are fully equipped to provide appropriate support so that pupils with SEND can flourish. Some pupils with SEND make better progress through the curriculum than their peers.

The school has developed a comprehensive strategy for identifying and remedying gaps in pupils' reading knowledge. In key stage 3, this is beginning to yield results. However, many pupils in key stage 4 do not read as well as they should. The school has not ensured that these pupils receive effective support to catch up. This affects how well these pupils access the wider curriculum and means that some are not ready for the next stage of their education.

The school has focused on improving its culture of behaviour. Some of this work has borne fruit. Classroom routines are fully embedded, and pupils understand what is expected of them. Older pupils commented on how, over time, behaviour has improved and how discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated. Despite this, there remain a few pupils who do not behave as well as they should, including by occasionally using derogatory language.

The school is vehement about helping pupils to overcome the many barriers that they face to education, including by improving their rates of attendance. The highly effective careers provision reflects the school's determination to raise pupils' aspirations. Pupils move on to positive destinations after leaving school. Sixth-form students take advantage of the many opportunities on offer, including university visits and learning about apprenticeships.

The school prepares pupils well for life in modern society. Members of the school council spoke enthusiastically about how they influence and affect change. Sixth-form students value the school's consideration of pupil voice. Across the school, pupils' experiences are enhanced through a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. Pupils with SEND are fully included in the life of the school.

The school has moved forward since the previous inspection. Trustees have tightened the lines of accountability, and this increased scrutiny has been welcomed by leaders and staff alike. Nevertheless, the checking of the school's work is not as effective as it should be. This prevents the school from having sufficient oversight of the impact of its actions to improve aspects of its provision, including the curriculum.

Staff are positive about the changes that the school has implemented. They shared extensive examples of how the school supports their workload and well-being, such as flexible working to fit in with family life.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not use the school's assessment systems consistently well. Some teachers do not identify pupils' misconceptions, while others move on to new learning before pupils are ready. Some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge as a result. The school should ensure that teachers are suitably equipped to identify and remedy gaps in pupils' learning before introducing new knowledge.
- Some older pupils have gaps in their reading knowledge. This hinders how well they access the wider curriculum. The school should ensure that these pupils are supported to remedy the gaps in their reading knowledge so that they can be fully prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The school does not have sufficient oversight of the impact of some aspects of its work, including the quality of education that pupils receive. This makes it difficult for the school to identify what is working well and what needs improving. The school should ensure that there are suitable processes in place to evaluate the impact of the quality of education that it provides.
- There are a few pupils whose behaviour sometimes falls short of the school's high expectations. On occasion, this behaviour disrupts these pupils' learning and undermines the school's vision for equality. The school should ensure that these pupils are supported to improve their behaviour over time.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138695
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10343984
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,017
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	91
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sir Robert Dowling
Headteacher	Tutvinder Mann
Website	www.georgedixonacademy.com
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 June 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a single-academy trust.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspection started on 17 December 2024. Inspectors returned on 14 January 2025 to gather additional evidence in line with [Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence](#) policy.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and staff. The lead inspector also met with those responsible for governance, including the chair of the trust and some trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. They visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work in these subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at the start and end of the school day, during lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils through discussions held during the inspection and through responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Rachel Goodwin, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Chris Carr	His Majesty's Inspector
Jenny Jones	His Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Madden	His Majesty's Inspector
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Nicola Walters	Ofsted Inspector

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