Inspection of The Grange Academy

London Road, Bushey WD23 3AA

Inspection dates:	12 and 13 November 2024
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Sixth-form provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Danny Bryant. The school is part of the Future Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Lawrence Foley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Nash.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is an inclusive and caring school. Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They have a clear vision for school improvement. This is having a positive impact on the school. Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The school reinforces its high expectations when teaching pupils about the 'Grange Academy Way.' The school emphasises the values of 'knowledge, aspiration and respect' so that pupils understand clearly what is expected of them. This has led to improvements in behaviour and attitudes throughout the school.

The school promotes pupils' personal development as well as academic success. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to enrich their education. In the past, pupils have not achieved as well as they should have by the end of key stage 4. Current pupils are benefiting from improvements in the quality of education. They remember and apply important knowledge, which prepares them well for their next steps in education, training, or employment.

The vast majority of pupils behave well. Pupils value the support they receive from the school and feel safe. Incidents of poor behaviour have significantly reduced and are now infrequent. Pupils learn about the importance of respect and tolerance of other people. As a result, pupils typically treat one another with kindness and respect.

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

Previous weaknesses in the delivery of the school's curriculum failed to prepare pupils well for their next stages in education, employment, or training. The school has identified and addressed these weaknesses. Leaders across the trust collaborate effectively to ensure that the school's curriculum is regularly reviewed and updated. Staff now have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils are being better prepared for their future. This is because they are able to retain the knowledge that they have learned. The school's published outcomes in national examinations do not yet reflect these improvements.

The trust has invested significantly in staffing. Teachers are knowledgeable and receive the training required to teach their subjects well. Teachers use strong classroom routines to provide positive learning environments. Teachers present information clearly, breaking it down into manageable chunks. There is a focus on the key concepts that pupils should remember. This includes in the sixth form, where students are taught to develop greater independence in their studies. Most teachers are skilled at checking pupils' understanding. However, on occasion, when pupils' understanding is not checked carefully, gaps in pupils' knowledge are sometimes missed.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. The school ensures they can access its ambitious curriculum. Staff use information about pupils with SEND consistently well to meet pupils' needs in the classroom. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve the same success as their classmates.

The school encourages pupils to develop a love of reading. All pupils have opportunities to read well-chosen literature regularly. Leaders quickly identify those pupils who would benefit from additional support with reading, many of whom join the school during the school year. They put in place well-matched programmes of support to help pupils catch up.

Pupils behave and attend well. Most pupils follow the school's clearly defined expectations. The school is calm, and lessons are purposeful. However, some pupils' attitudes to their education are not as positive. A small number of pupils struggle to demonstrate the high expectations the school has for them. They do not always persevere and give up when learning is challenging. The school tracks pupils' attendance carefully. Attendance levels are high, including in the sixth form. A small number of pupils access some of their education at alternative provisions. The school ensures that these placements are matched well to individual pupils' needs and aspirations.

The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum helps pupils to understand the world around them and to develop their character. The school has thought carefully about what it wants pupils to learn and when. Pupils are encouraged to make healthy and safe choices for their physical and mental health.

Pupils are well prepared for life beyond school. Sixth-form students get practical guidance about topics such as student finance and healthy relationships. Pupils receive high-quality guidance so they can make well-informed choices about their futures.

There is a wide variety of clubs, trips, and visits to support pupils' personal development. These develop pupils' interests in a range of areas, for example in sports, music, and drama. The school and trust ensure that these opportunities are available to everyone.

Leaders identify what the school does well and what could be even better. Leaders seek feedback from parents and carers, which has supported the school's continued improvement. Trustees offer valuable support and challenge. Staff are united in their ambition for pupils to aim high and fulfil their potential.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment strategies sufficiently well to check and address pupils' misconceptions. This means that, at times, teachers do not identify the gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly enough. The school should ensure that all teachers have the skills they need to identify and address gaps in learning so that pupils build their learning securely over time.

- Some pupils do not always demonstrate resilience in their learning. This means that they sometimes miss important learning. The school should ensure that all pupils learn how to study effectively so that they can consistently demonstrate resilience to setbacks and commitment to their learning.

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	147785
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10318647
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	943
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	93
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Nash
CEO of the trust	Lawrence Foley
Principal	Danny Bryant
Website	www.thegrange.futureacademies.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Future Academies Trust.
- The school uses two registered alternative provisions.
- 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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 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 of the school. Inspectors met with the CEO and chair of the trust. Inspectors also met with the chair of the local governing body and one of its members.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, geography, science, and Latin. 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 considered pupils' learning in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 groups of pupils in all key stages. Inspectors evaluated pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about the school's work, including about safeguarding and behaviour. Inspectors also looked at staff and pupil responses to Ofsted's surveys. They also reviewed the responses made by parents to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Sam Johnson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Cindy Impey	Ofsted Inspector
Donna Young	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Barr	Ofsted Inspector

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