

Inspection of Guilsborough Academy

West Haddon Road, Guilsborough, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN6 8QE

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

The principal of this school is Simon Frazer. This school is part of Guilsborough Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the principal, who is also the chief executive officer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kevin Rogers.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have mixed feelings about the school. Some pupils enjoy school and say that it has improved. However, some pupils said they do not like school. Students in the sixth form speak positively about their experience at Guilsborough Academy.

Pupils feel safe in school and know who they can talk to if they have any concerns. However, some pupils said that bullying happens and they often hear homophobic language. They are not always confident that the school will deal with these issues. Some pupils do not report the concerns they have.

Most lessons are calm and orderly. There is some low-level disruption that sometimes stops others learning. Most pupils have good attitudes to learning. However, some pupils choose to do little work in lessons. Pupils said that staff are not always fair or consistent when dealing with behaviour issues.

Some pupils do not behave well at unstructured times. Sometimes pupils are boisterous when going to lessons and they do not always follow staff's instructions.

Pupils have a range of opportunities to learn about different careers. There is a variety of clubs that pupils can attend. For example, some pupils attend chess, football, netball and art clubs. Many pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

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

There is an ambitious curriculum in place for most subjects. The school has detailed the knowledge pupils should learn and in what order. Some subject areas are still developing their curriculum to ensure that pupils build their knowledge over time.

In some subjects, teachers deliver the curriculum well. They have good subject knowledge. They present new topics clearly and check that pupils understand what they have learned. This is not done consistently well in all lessons. Sometimes, when explaining new topics, teachers present too much information. Some pupils find this confusing as they have too much to take in. This means they cannot always complete work. They do not learn as well as they could.

Some teachers do not check carefully enough that pupils have a secure understanding of what they have learned. This means that gaps in learning, or misconceptions that pupils have, are not always addressed. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Sixth-form teachers have good subject knowledge. They deliver the curriculum well. Students have good attitudes to learning and engage with their work in lessons. They progress through the curriculum and achieve well.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Some pupils with SEND go to the 'outreach' provision for extra help. This supports them in accessing the curriculum. Teachers get clear information on how to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Not all teachers use this information well to support pupils to access the curriculum. This means that some pupils with SEND cannot always complete work and they do not achieve as well as they could. The school provides many opportunities for parents of pupils with SEND to understand how the school supports their child. There are SEND parents evenings and a parent forum where they can raise any issues. These events are helping to build a better relationship with these parents.

Pupils who need extra help to improve their reading get extra support. This is helping them to read more confidently. Guided reading sessions help pupils to develop their vocabulary and comprehension.

There is a clear behaviour system in place. Some staff use this well. But this is not consistent. This means that some pupils do not always understand the expectations the school has for them. Some pupils do not work as well as they could. On occasions, pupils' learning is interrupted by the poor behaviour of others. Some pupils do not behave well when moving around school. They push other pupils and sometimes playfight. This makes some younger pupils feel uncomfortable.

Some pupils said that the school does not deal with bullying well. They said that discriminatory language is common. The school has worked on these issues, but some pupils still hold these views.

The school has ensured that there is a well-planned curriculum in place for pupils' personal development. However, this is not always delivered well. Some teachers do not always cover important elements of the curriculum. This means that some pupils have a limited understanding of fundamental British values and equalities. They are not well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Trustees fulfil their statutory duties. Staff say that behaviour has improved. They feel well supported and are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes when explaining new topics, teachers present too much information. This confuses some pupils as they cannot take in everything the teacher has covered. Pupils do not always understand the work they need to do and cannot complete tasks fully. The school should ensure that teachers know how to break

new information down into manageable chunks so that pupils understand what they need to learn.

- Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding of what they have learned. This means that they do not always address misconceptions or gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, pupils do not always learn as well as they could. Teachers should ensure that they systematically check pupils' understanding so that they can address any gaps in knowledge or misconceptions.
- Not all teachers use the information they have about the needs of pupils with SEND to adapt their teaching for these pupils. This means that sometimes these pupils cannot access the curriculum and they do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers know how to use the information they get about the needs of pupils with SEND so that these pupils can fully access the curriculum.
- Staff do not always use the school's agreed approach to managing behaviour. At times, expectations for how pupils should behave are too low. This means that there is low-level disruption in some lessons. Some pupils' behaviour at unstructured times is poor. This makes some pupils feel uncomfortable. The school should ensure that all staff use the school's behaviour system consistently so that pupils know and meet the school's expectations.
- Some pupils said that bullying and homophobic comments happen frequently. Some pupils do not have confidence in how the school deals with these issues and therefore they do not always report concerns. The school should ensure that all pupils know how to report any bullying or the concerns they have about other pupils' language. The school should also ensure that pupils know how they deal with concerns so that pupils have confidence in how the school deals with these issues.
- Some teachers do not always cover important elements of the personal development curriculum. This means that some pupils do not have a secure understanding of fundamental British values or equalities. They are not well-enough prepared for life in modern Britain. The school should ensure that there is enough time to deliver all the personal development curriculum so that all pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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	136489
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10268090
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	1329
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	196
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kevin Rogers
Principal	Simon Frazer
Website	www.guilsborough.northants.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 May 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Guilsborough Multi Academy Trust.
- The school use two registered and three unregistered alternative providers and 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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, the two vice-principals and six assistant principals.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, design technology, computing 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, visited lessons, and looked at curriculum planning in some other subjects.
- Inspectors visited registration sessions and an assembly.
- 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 from a range of year groups, including pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires.
- An inspector held telephone conversations with representatives of the alternative providers used by the school.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees and other trustees.

Inspection team

Paul Halcro, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gulbanu Kader	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Sammy	Ofsted Inspector
Damian Painton	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Anderson	Ofsted Inspector

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