

Inspection of The Gainsborough Academy

Sweyn Lane, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 1PB

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. They aim for pupils to broaden their horizons and to be caring, well-rounded people. Leaders have introduced 'The Gainsborough Way' and 'Pledges' systems to support this. A good proportion of pupils achieve those aims. However, the behaviour and attitudes of some pupils show that these aims and core values are not being adopted by all.

Most pupils are keen to learn, but a minority do not behave well. Behaviour is not managed consistently. Lessons are regularly disrupted by poor behaviour. Some pupils' behaviour during movement around school is too boisterous, causing other pupils to feel unsafe.

Pupils say that they know they should treat each other with respect. Despite this, frequent instances of bullying occur. Pupils typically say that there are adults they can speak to if they have concerns. However, too many pupils lack confidence in staff to tackle bullying effectively and make it stop.

Although attendance is showing signs of improving, some pupils do not attend regularly enough.

Pupils can participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them. These include sports clubs, cookery club and boxing club. There are also opportunities that enable pupils to develop leadership skills.

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

The curriculum reflects leaders' ambition for all pupils to do well. It is broad and offers pupils a range of academic experiences. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as other pupils.

Subject leaders have clear curriculum plans in place for most subjects. These identify the important knowledge and skills that pupils must learn. The learning follows a sequence so that pupils build on what they already know and are ready for the next steps. The teaching of the curriculum is variable. In some subjects, pupils show a firm grasp of knowledge and understanding of what they have been taught over time. However, in others, pupils struggle to remember what they have learned previously.

The school uses 'flashbacks' and 'get ready' tasks. When these are effective, they allow pupils to recap on previous work and enable teachers to check on understanding. However, assessment in some lessons is not well developed and misconceptions go unchallenged.

Leaders are prioritising reading in the school to develop pupils' literacy skills and to instil in them a love of reading. Leaders quickly identify the pupils who have fallen behind in reading. They ensure that pupils get help to read with fluency.

Leaders know that the behaviour of some pupils, especially when moving between lessons and at breaktimes, is not good enough. New routines and expectations are in place. However, some pupils do not show respect to their peers or to staff. Some interrupt learning in lessons. Some pupils do not attend school regularly, which means they miss out on key aspects of their education.

The new 'hubs' created this year provide a safe, nurturing place for pupils to go to if they need support. Pupils with (SEND) are well cared for and included in school life.

Many pupils speak positively about the programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). They value these lessons, which include raising pupils' awareness of how to stay safe both online and in person. There are opportunities for pupils to learn about equality and diversity. However, this aspect of pupils' learning is not well developed. Many pupils struggle to remember their learning about British values. For example, many do not understand why the law protects the rights of some groups.

Pupils receive high-quality careers advice. They receive information about a range of post-16 courses, including academic and non-academic routes. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause.

Trustees and the headteacher are tackling the key areas that need improving, but progress is slow. All leaders share the ambition to make a difference to the lives of the pupils who attend the school.

Staff feel that leaders are approachable and considerate of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders know pupils and their families very well. Leaders take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. They have put in place effective systems to keep pupils safe. Staff receive regular and appropriate training. Records are well maintained. Leaders take prompt action in response to any concerns.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. This includes when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not implement the school's assessment strategy consistently. Some teachers move pupils on to new learning before they have ensured that pupils have acquired the knowledge they need to access that learning. Leaders must

ensure that misconceptions are identified and addressed quickly so that pupils learn as well as they should.

- Too many pupils are persistently absent. They are missing education and are at risk of falling behind their peers. Leaders should further develop their strategies to ensure that all pupils attend regularly so that they do not miss out on learning.
- Pupils do not behave consistently well around the school site at social times and between lessons. Some pupils are disrespectful when challenged by staff. Some pupils feel uncomfortable around the school building. Leaders should ensure that pupils are respectful and that they are supported to behave well. Leaders should also ensure that staff are consistently using the school behaviour policy so that pupils feel comfortable in all areas of the school and their learning is not disrupted.
- Leaders have not ensured that a culture of mutual respect and inclusivity permeates the school. Some pupils experience bullying. When concerns are reported, they are not always resolved. Leaders must ensure that there is an open culture of respect, where pupils feel confident to report their concerns, knowing that they will be dealt with effectively.
- Leaders have not ensured that the programme for personal development fully meets pupils' needs. Many pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding of British values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Leaders should ensure that a well-planned, sequenced programme of personal development enables pupils to understand the importance of treating all others, including those who share a protected characteristic, with respect.
- Leaders have shared their vision for delivering a high-quality education but it is not realised as yet. In particular, leaders have not ensured that policies and expected practice are understood and delivered by all staff. Some developments have not been implemented swiftly enough to achieve the required improvements. Leaders need to ensure that the necessary changes happen rapidly so that their vision can be realised.

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

Unique reference number	145954
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10241317
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	711
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Steve Calvert
Headteacher	Rachael Skelton
Website	www.thegainsboroughacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Wickersley Partnership Trust.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school has high numbers of mid-year admissions.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide students in Years 8 to 13 with information 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.

- 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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, science, music and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with

subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also visited a range of lessons in other subjects. For these subjects, they checked the work pupils had produced in lessons and spoke to pupils in the class.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from key stages 3 and 4.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. She reviewed a range of documents and the single central record.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the chair of governors and met with a trustee.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and considered the results of the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Dawn Ashbolt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Chris Davies	His Majesty's Inspector
Christine Horrocks	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Roche	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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