

Inspection of a good school: Q3 Academy Great Barr

Wilderness Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham, West Midlands, B43 7SD

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 September 2022

Outcome

Q3 Academy Great Barr continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Q3 Academy Great Barr serves its community well. Relationships between pupils and teachers are strong and based on mutual respect. Pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). High numbers of pupils progress successfully on to higher education, apprenticeships and employment.

Leaders have set out clear expectations for pupils' conduct and behaviour. These expectations are well understood by pupils and constantly applied by staff. Pupils are consistently 'ready, respectful and responsible'. This means that the school environment is purposeful and pupils feel safe. Pupils behave well in lessons and at other times of the school day. Bullying is uncommon. Most pupils are confident that adults will take it seriously and sort it out quickly if it does happen.

Many pupils attend the impressive range of opportunities and clubs on offer. In music, for example, a range of pupils from across the school meet up weekly to play, relax or simply chat about their musical interests. There are also opportunities for pupils to develop their character and leadership skills. Many pupils, for instance, take pride in being part of the Combined Cadet Force and wearing their uniform in the weekly parades.

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

The headteacher is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. Over recent years, he and other leaders have taken effective steps to improve the curriculum. All pupils now study a broad range of subjects in depth from Year 7 to Year 9. As a result of these actions, ever increasing numbers of pupils are better prepared to study the range of subjects that are part of the English Baccalaureate.

Pupils with SEND are well supported to learn the whole curriculum from Year 7 through to the sixth form. All pupils with SEND have a one-page profile. This profile sets out helpful information and strategies to support pupils. In addition, leaders regularly train all staff in

how to use the strategies set out in the one-page profiles. All of this means that pupils with SEND are fully included and get the help they need to succeed.

Curriculum leaders ensure that pupils learn content in a logical order. For example, in English, pupils in Year 7 get lots of practise in using rhetorical devices in their writing before they learn to identify its use in the writing of others. This logical approach supports pupils to know and remember more. Furthermore, in most subjects, curriculum plans set out the essential knowledge that pupils must know and remember. In history, for instance, teachers understand the exact content pupils need to remember, so that pupils are well prepared for future learning. This approach is working well. However, the precise knowledge pupils need to know is unclear in a few subjects. In these cases, teachers sometimes move on to new learning before pupils are ready to do so. This slows some pupils' learning.

Teachers, including those in the sixth form, have strong subject knowledge. They explain subject content clearly and check pupils' understanding well in lessons. Teachers use questions skilfully to help them to spot pupils who may be stuck. This means that pupils who need help get it quickly.

Leaders pay serious attention to ensuring that all pupils can read. They quickly identify pupils who need help with their reading when they join the school. These pupils get good support from experienced and skilled staff. Consequently, these pupils are becoming more confident and fluent readers. Leaders also place a strong emphasis on promoting reading across the curriculum. During form time, adults read stories to pupils. A carefully chosen selection of books help pupils to improve their word understanding and broaden their knowledge of various health, well-being and social issues. In the sixth form, teachers ensure pupils routinely read articles and academic papers as part of their learning.

The school is calm and orderly. Disruption to learning is rare and very little learning time is lost. During lesson changeovers, pupils move around the building sensibly and without fuss.

The school's 'Inspire' curriculum helps pupils to gain an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. In addition, the school ensures that pupils receive helpful advice and guidance about future careers from Year 7 through to Year 13.

Those responsible for governance understand their roles well. Trustees have multi-layered systems in place for checking the quality of education. These systems include gathering the views of parents, staff and pupils. Consequently, those responsible for governance know the school well and how it can improve further. Leaders work hard to promote staff well-being. Staff morale is high. Adults value the role they play in pupils' education. They are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture of vigilance across the school community. They ensure that all staff know how to spot the signs that a pupil may need help. Staff are alert to these signs. They pass on any concerns about pupils without delay. When needed, leaders work tenaciously with other agencies to ensure the best outcomes for vulnerable pupils.

Pupils know who to talk to in school if they have concerns. Leaders ensure that pupils get the support and information they need to help them keep safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders and staff are not clear about the essential knowledge that pupils are expected to know and remember. This is a barrier to some pupils knowing more and remembering more. Leaders should ensure that, in all subjects, teachers are clear about the specific content pupils need to know and remember before moving on to new learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2013.

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	135449
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10211324
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1168
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	113
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kevin Davis
Headteacher	Mark Arnull
Website	http://www.q3academy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses five registered alternative providers and four un-registered alternative providers.
- The school is part of The Mercian Trust. It joined the trust in May 2022.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and the director of education for the Mercian Trust. They met with representatives of governance, including the chair of the trust board and the chair of the local governing body.

- Inspectors did deep dives in history, science, music and French. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders and teachers, visited a sample of lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with some pupils about their learning.
- Through discussions with leaders, pupils and staff, inspectors considered how effectively pupils are safeguarded. They also looked at documents related to safeguarding, including records of pre-employment checks carried out before staff are appointed. They also observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding arrangements and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about behaviour and workload in the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also looked at 60 staff responses and 40 pupil responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

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