

Inspection of Goldington Academy

Haylands Way, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK41 9BX

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They enthuse about it to their parents, who know that they feel safe and happy. Pupils have many subjects to choose from, so everyone gets a chance to shine. They know that leaders have very high expectations of what they can achieve.

The school recently changed from being a middle school. Pupils said that leaders have kept the best things about the old school, but made it even better. This is because leaders have kept a sharp focus on making teaching even more effective.

Pupils know that leaders seek out their opinions, and those of other members of the school, including teachers and parents. Leaders listen carefully to what they are told and make improvements as a result.

Pupils have wonderful opportunities to contribute to their school and they are inspired by the wide range of high-quality clubs and societies they regularly attend. They are incredibly well prepared for their next steps.

Pupils' 'life-skills' lessons are expertly planned and delivered. Pupils learn the importance of treating others with respect. This helps shape their positive conduct, and they behave and attend well. If they encounter poor behaviour such as bullying, they are confident it will be dealt with effectively.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have developed a rich key stage 4 curriculum from scratch. They have recruited expert teachers to deliver it. They ensure that every pupil is ambitious in the range of subjects they choose.

Subject leaders plan learning carefully. They design lessons which ensure that pupils undertake a range of interesting tasks. Teachers supported pupils well during the national lockdowns, and helped pupils to hit the ground running on their return. However, not all teachers check how much pupils have remembered from previous lessons or help them enough to remember new content.

Leaders thoroughly and precisely evaluate everything that goes on in the school. They know its strengths. They put relevant training in place where they need to sharpen practice further. They particularly focus on training to make teaching in each subject even stronger.

Leaders' communication with all members of the school community is excellent. For example, leaders listen carefully to what staff tell them about workloads. This helps them to support the staff's well-being effectively.

Leaders have overseen the improvement of facilities to support learning. These include a well-used new library. Leaders have introduced initiatives to strengthen the position of reading across the curriculum. This includes extra help for the weakest readers.

Governors are highly skilled. They do not take the information that leaders give them at face value. They interrogate it thoroughly. Their expert questioning ensures that the curriculum is meeting the needs of all the pupils in the school.

Personal development is a great strength. The range of leadership opportunities for pupils is exceptional. They act as ambassadors for anti-bullying and restorative justice. They help other pupils put into practice what they learn in the curriculum about positive physical and mental well-being. Every subject area has its own ambassadors. They make a real difference. For example, geography ambassadors work actively to improve the environment of the school site.

All pupils receive effective careers advice. They learn about the world of work and what qualifications they need for different careers. Since the school has had Year 11 pupils, each one has moved successfully to the next stage of their education or employment.

Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. It is very unusual for poor behaviour to get in the way of learning. Most pupils develop very positive attitudes to their lessons and, as a result, push themselves to take advantage of every learning opportunity. However, a small number of boys do not always show the same level of consistent application as their peers.

The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. Leaders ensure that teachers understand the best strategies for every pupil with SEND. This helps these pupils to thrive and flourish studying the same curriculum as their peers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All members of the school community prioritise safeguarding. Staff know to report all concerns, however minor. Safeguarding concerns are followed up swiftly, so that pupils and families get the support they need. All staff are well trained.

Leaders communicate well with external agencies. Leaders check the off-site alternative provision they use. Governors understand their responsibility for safeguarding, and ensure that it is undertaken effectively.

Safeguarding is thoroughly covered in the curriculum. For example, pupils are tested on their e-safety knowledge. Concerns arising from the local community are addressed effectively through assemblies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all teachers systematically check how much pupils have remembered from previous lessons, or place enough emphasis on helping them to remember key knowledge and skills. Consequently, pupils sometimes struggle to integrate new knowledge into the themes and ideas they covered previously. Leaders should work with teachers in order to develop strategies to ensure that pupils are given sufficient opportunity to remember and recall key information in lessons.
- A small proportion of boys do not display the same positive attitudes to learning as most other pupils. As a result, their work is of a variable quality and they do not make the same progress as their peers. Leaders should work with teachers in order to develop a range of effective strategies to ensure that they engage and motivate all pupils.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	136552
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10210940
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	811
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Robin Francis
Principal	Francis Galbraith
Website	www.goldington.beds.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the school was previously inspected it has undergone significant change. It was a 9 to 12 middle school. It is now an 11 to 16 secondary school.
- The school is a single-academy trust, Goldington Academy Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the principal and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the trust and three other members of the trust board.

- Deep dives were carried out in English, mathematics, science, geography, modern foreign languages and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects. They spoke to the special educational needs coordinator and pastoral leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to early career teachers and those who support their induction into the school.
- Inspectors evaluated the information available on the school's website, including school policies, curriculum plans and information available for parents.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the arrangements in place to safeguard all members of the school community. The checks leaders make on the suitability of staff were scrutinised, and records were checked.
- Inspectors reviewed records of behaviour, including incidents of bullying. They scrutinised information about attendance. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes.
- The inspectors reviewed 63 responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also reviewed the 35 free-text comments that parents submitted during the inspection. The inspectors also considered 38 responses to the staff survey and 82 responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke with pupils to gather their views on the school.

Inspection team

Paul Lawrence, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Dan Leonard	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Pryor	Ofsted Inspector
Shan Oswald	Ofsted Inspector

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