

Inspection of Grange School

Matthews Lane, Gorton, Manchester M12 4GR

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Rachael Clifford. This trust is part of the Prospere Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Linda Jones, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jenny Andrews.

What is it like to attend this school?

The Grange School is an inspirational learning environment in which pupils thrive and prosper. The school has created a safe and nurturing atmosphere. It has high expectations and a steely determination to make sure that pupils enjoy a rich, broad curriculum. This ambition for pupils' achievement becomes a reality. Pupils at all stages in their school life blossom, both socially and academically.

Pupils are delighted to come to school every day. Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. Staff care for pupils well with affection and concern for their well-being. This helps pupils to have a strong sense of belonging and they feel part of the school community.

Pupils are friendly, respectful and supportive of each other. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils learn to increasingly manage their own emotions which helps them to understand their own behaviour and feelings. Where needed, well-trained staff support pupils with their behaviour. This results in a school environment which is like a sanctuary for pupils.

The school ensures that pupils are well prepared for adult life. Pupils have extensive opportunities to practise different skills over their school career which support them to move very successfully into adulthood. For example, in the 'futures flat', students learn skills to help them to live independently.

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

The curriculum on offer at The Grange from early years to sixth form is extraordinary. It is broad, balanced and ambitious. The school considers and identifies the knowledge which pupils should learn at every stage in the finest detail. Consequently, the curriculum meets pupils' needs precisely.

This begins in the early years. The school builds children's knowledge and skills based on a clear understanding of their education and care needs, their home life and previous experiences. The way that teachers design learning for children in the early years is clearly effective. This approach continues throughout the school and sixth form. Teachers show a remarkable understanding of their subjects. They use their expertise well to support pupils' learning.

In every subject, the school uses assessment strategies effectively to identify whether pupils have learned the required content. This helps teachers to plan for next steps in learning extremely well. They ensure that pupils can show and demonstrate their learning in a range of contexts before they move onto new learning. This results in pupils' improving their knowledge very well over time.

A passion for literature and a culture of reading are apparent throughout the school. Reading is taught daily for all year groups and pupils take home books to share with their families. Pupils have access to two impressive libraries which supports their

reading, but also touches pupils' interests. For example, when pupils develop an interest in certain genres or authors, staff make recommendations. This extends pupils' interest and exposure to the highest quality literature.

Pupils learn to recognise letters and sounds in a systematic way. This enables pupils to link these sounds together to read words. Reading books are perfectly matched to the sounds that pupils know. Reading books for each year group are carefully selected to support pupils' learning in many different curriculum subjects. Pupils are thoroughly prepared for their next steps in reading.

The school develops pupils' talents and interests through an extensive wider curriculum offer. Pupils make choices about what they would like to do in the future. From the early years, children get to experience learning in the 'imagination village' to develop their curiosity, imaginative and life skills. This continues with pupils developing their social communication through the 'tiny town'. The 'buddy barn farm' allows pupils to develop their character as well as supporting pupils' well-being. The wider curriculum offer continues through to sixth form with the 'brewhog café'. Student baristas run the café. This gives them the chance to apply their skills of communication, teamwork and organisation. Students take these skills into their experience of employment.

Career provision is an exceptional strength of the school. From the early years, all pupils learn about careers. The school ensures that students get the opportunities to explore their interests. The school provides opportunities for pupils to learn about specific industries so that students have the necessary knowledge, should they want to move into that industry. For example, some pupils learn about car maintenance to prepare them for a pathway into that industry.

Pupils demonstrate high levels of engagement from early years through to sixth form. They focus on their learning in lessons. Pupils, including students in sixth form, demonstrate strong levels of resilience. This includes whenever they encounter difficulties. As a result, lessons are not interrupted, and pupils can focus. Pupils love their learning. They demonstrate remarkably positive attitudes to their studies.

The school's leadership has been instrumental in the transformation of this school. The trust and local governing board are very knowledgeable about the school. The trust has provided a range of appropriate support to the school, particularly in relation to staff training. Leaders ensure that every staff member receives the precise professional development they need to make them highly effective in their role. The school is consistently striving to refine and extend the education on offer to pupils. It is thorough in its work with parents. For example, the school has devised bespoke ways of communicating with parents. Staff report that the school and the trust consider their workload and well-being thoroughly. For example, the support and guidance provided by the school helps teachers with their preparation for lessons and reduces workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	145845
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10290340
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	262
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	33
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jenny Andrews
Headteacher	Rachael Clifford
Website	www.grange.manchester.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with autism.
- Leaders do not make any use of any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Year 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The Grange converted to be an academy in May 2019. When its predecessor school, Grange School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.

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.
- This was the first routine inspection that 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, history and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, talked with pupils and staff and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders to discuss pupils' rates of attendance and pupils' behaviour.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. He met with the chair of the trust and the chief executive officer. He also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes and during their snack time. They scrutinised leaders' records of behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan and the school's self-evaluation document.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders 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 spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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