

Inspection of High Point Academy

Friar Park Road, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 0JS

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Outstanding |
| Personal development | Outstanding |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

The headteacher of this school is Kelly-Leigh Kulyk. This school is part of Forward Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Simon Dilkes, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kate Canty.

What is it like to attend this school?

High Point Academy is a nurturing and inclusive school. Pupils are happy, safe and well cared for. The school pays serious attention to meeting the needs of individual pupils. Consequently, pupils achieve well.

The school caters for pupils with autism. Staff are highly skilled at understanding the barriers to learning for each individual pupil. All pupils have their own individual holistic pupil activity plan. These plans set out the tailored support and activities needed to help pupils overcome any barriers.

Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and caring. Staff understand how pupils' behaviours are a form of communication. Staff take time to understand and respond sensitively to individual pupils' behaviours. Behaviour across school is calm and orderly. Pupils are settled and content.

Pupils embody the 'ACE' values of the school. These include ambition, challenge and encouraging independence. For example, pupils are given responsibilities, such as caring for the school dog, Farla. Furthermore, pupils have opportunities to follow their interests and talents. These include music and dance clubs as well as sports commentating. All of this means that the school is preparing pupils well for their futures.

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

The school is led by ambitious leaders who are committed to the education and lives of pupils in their care. Pupils arrive from many different settings and mostly from mainstream schools. Since the school opened, there has been an increase in pupils arriving with more complex needs. The school and the trust have responded quickly and have adapted the curriculum to include pathways to help and support all pupils effectively. At this point in time, the school continues to develop and refine areas of the curriculum, as they respond to the growing numbers of pupils.

The curriculum is designed to support pupils through two pathways. This allows pupils with similar needs to learn together. In many subjects, such as design and technology, leaders have carefully thought about what additional knowledge pupils will need in their daily lives. This supports pupils' preparation for adulthood well. For example, pupils learn how to change batteries and fuses, fill holes in walls and other practical activities. In addition, pupils are taught subject-specific vocabulary for different tools. Pupils build on their knowledge over time in a progressive and logical order. However, this is not the case in all subject areas. In some subjects, the specific-subject knowledge leaders want pupils to learn is not as clearly defined. This slows pupils' learning in these areas.

The classroom and whole-school environment are carefully designed to support pupils' communication and interaction needs. Staff develop resources to help pupils learn the curriculum. For example, symbols and visual aids are created in each

subject area to help pupils access their learning successfully. Pupils who need help with their expressive communication, including pupils who do not use verbal language, are taught how to use different systems and aids, such as signing, communication books and electronic devices. Furthermore, the school has a strong understanding of how pupils' mental health and well-being can be affected by their associated communication and interaction needs. Leaders ensure pupils get the help and support they need. Consequently, all the support that is put in place means that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are met exceptionally well here.

The school promotes the love of reading from the start. Some pupils arrive with a negative view of reading. Staff reignite pupils' love of books and reading through daily reading activities. In English, pupils study a wide range of texts. Pupils are given opportunities to gain qualifications in English by the time they leave school. However, for a small number of pupils, who are at the early stages of reading, a systematic approach to teaching phonics is not in place. Although, pupils are given daily opportunities to practise phonics, this is not delivered in a structured and progressive way. This means they are not catching up as quickly as they could.

The school works closely with external agencies to help understand pupils' emotions, anxieties and worries. Pupils sit together and share their thoughts and emotions with one another. Pupils offer advice and strategies to help each other. This in turn builds and develops their character very well.

Pupils are given various opportunities for accessing careers advice, work experience and vocational learning. Pupils are well prepared for their next stages of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the specific-subject knowledge leaders want pupils to learn is not defined or sequenced clearly. This slows pupils' learning and means they are not achieving as well as they could. The school should ensure that the essential knowledge is identified in all parts of the curriculum and sequenced clearly over time.
- For a very small number of pupils, who are at the early stages of reading, a progressive and systematic approach to teaching phonics is not in place. This means that pupils are not learning how to read fluently, or as quickly as they are capable of learning. The school should ensure that phonics is taught in a systematic way and that staff are given the necessary training to deliver this.

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 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

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| Unique reference number | 148400 |
| Local authority | Sandwell |
| Inspection number | 10294713 |
| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Free school special |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 96 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Kate Canty |
| Headteacher | Kelly-Leigh Kulyk |
| Website | www.highpoint.fet.ac |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school first opened in September 2021. The deputy headteacher joined in January 2023 and the assistant headteacher joined in September 2022.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. The primary area of need includes autism. Pupils also have associated needs, such communication and interaction, social, emotional and sensory needs.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.
- 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 apprenticeship.

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 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 of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, chair of trustees, chair of the local governing board, additional representatives from the trust, subject coordinators, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally with passenger assistants, drivers and staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with a trust school improvement partner and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, including early reading, communication and interaction, history and physical education. 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. The inspectors also looked at additional subjects, including mathematics, design and technology, art and design and personal, social, health and economic education.
- The lead inspector observed pupils' reading to a familiar adult.
- 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 considered responses to the online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. Inspectors also looked at responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation, school policies and curriculum documents.

Inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Anna Vrahimi, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Barry Yeadsley | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Simon Smith | Ofsted Inspector |

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