

Inspection of a good school: EBN Academy 2

10 High Street, Castle Vale, Birmingham, West Midlands B35 7PR

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 April 2024

Outcome

EBN Academy 2 continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Matthew Wallis-Baldwin. This school is part of the EBN Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Matthew Wallis-Baldwin, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Brown.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming here and most attend often. Leaders work closely with parents and families to understand and meet pupils' individual need when they join the school. Consequently, despite previous disruption in their learning, most pupils quickly settle when they join the school. Overall, pupils embody the calm and purposeful atmosphere that permeates the school.

Staff place pupils' well-being at the heart of their work. There is a clear culture of mutual respect between staff, pupils, and parents. Pupils feel safe here. Leaders understand that pupils have, in the past, struggled to manage their own behaviours. Leaders work smartly to support pupils to overcome these challenges. They set clear expectations for pupils, and pupils work hard to meet these. If pupils do not behave well enough, staff challenge this in a calm and caring manner. Pupils' behaviour and resilience quickly improve during their time here.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to strengthen their wider personal development. They take responsibility for projects such as developing a useable space for young children in the local community. Pupils are rightly proud of this work, which helps to develop their understanding of their social responsibility. There is a strong sense of community here. Pupils say that they feel part of one big family, and that they 'feel seen' here.

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

Leaders are creating a culture here where both academic success and personal growth are prioritised. The headteacher has successfully galvanised his team around this ambitious vision. Staff are proud to work here.

Pupils study a broad academic curriculum. Pupils join the school at different points throughout the year, with many having had significant time out of school before arriving. Leaders make sound use of a range of assessments to identify pupils' academic starting points when they join. They use this information to good effect and ensure that the curriculum is well matched to the things pupils already know. Across each subject, leaders have identified the small steps that pupils need to take in their learning. They have sequenced this well so that the things pupils learn build successfully on what they have been taught before. This work helps pupils to make sound progress as they begin to re-engage in their education.

Leaders have recently reinvigorated their approach to reading. They are working hard to break down the barriers to reading that pupils experience. They are building an increasingly clear picture of pupils' reading ability and provide support to ensure that pupils begin to close any gaps in their reading. This work is helping pupils to become more-confident readers.

All pupils who attend the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders are building up a clear picture of the increasingly broad range of needs that their pupils have. Consequently, in the main, pupils' additional needs are met well. However, some of the support that leaders provide is not always as well targeted to the pupils' individual needs as it could be. Additionally, some staff do not have the knowledge needed to meet pupils' needs in lesson. This holds some pupils back.

Before joining EBN Academy 2, many pupils did not attend school often enough or did not behave well when in school. These behaviours are quickly challenged and changed when pupils join the school. Leaders work closely with families to understand pupils' barriers and provide support to help overcome these. For example, all pupils access a mentoring programme that helps to build pupils' sense of accountability for their own behaviours. This work is having a positive impact.

The school makes sure that pupils benefit from a range of encounters with the world of work. Some of these are closely aligned to the school's public services curriculum. However, the range of experiences offered to pupils who do not study this subject is narrow, and not always well matched to pupils' career aspirations. Where this happens, pupils' horizons are limited. Despite this, many pupils go on to make successful transitions into their next stages of education.

Leaders do not always track the impact of their work carefully enough and at times are unclear about which aspects of their work are having impact and which are not. Consequently, leaders' work is not always as focused as it could be.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are at the early stages of using assessment information to inform the support they offer to some pupils with SEND, and some staff do not know how best to meet these needs. Consequently, some pupils' needs are not as well met as they could be. Leaders should ensure they use the information they receive about pupils to enhance the training for staff and provide targeted interventions as appropriate that are tightly focused on pupils' needs.
- Leaders do not have sufficient oversight over some aspects of their work. This means that the school's work is not always well connected or used strategically to drive forward some of the improvements needed. Leaders should ensure they carefully monitor and evaluate all aspects of their provisions to ensure their work is having the desired impact.
- The careers education that pupils receive is limited in its scope. Consequently, pupils are not always aware of the broad range of opportunities that are available to them in the future. Leaders should ensure they provide pupils with a broad range of meaningful encounters with the world of work to support them to develop their understanding of future career pathways.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2018.

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

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| Unique reference number | 141739 |
| Local authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 10322869 |
| Type of school | Alternative provision |
| School category | Academy alternative provision sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 13 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | David Brown |
| Headteacher | Matthew Wallis-Baldwin |
| Website | www.ebnacademy2.co.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 5 and 6 December 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is one of two schools that form the EBN Trust.
- The school currently uses two providers of alternative provision for a small number of pupils. These providers are registered with Ofsted.
- Pupils attending EBN Academy 2 remain on the roll of their previous school. Many were at risk of permanent exclusion from their previous school. Some of them have an education, health and care plan.
- 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 apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- 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.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 held discussions with the headteacher, and other senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English; personal, social, health and economic education; and science. 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.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection.
- The inspectors considered responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Alexander Laney, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gail Brindley

Ofsted Inspector

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