



Dear Parent/Carer,

As you may be aware, Sandwell Academy was visited by Ofsted on 14 and 15 May 2024 for a Section 5 Inspection. This was the first time the Academy had received a graded inspection since 2014, undergoing a monitoring visit in 2017. These visits were completed under a different framework from what is currently operational in schools. On the recent visit, Inspectors spent two days in classrooms, on corridors, in meetings with people across the Academy, and garnered feedback from parents, carers, staff and students through questionnaires and conversations. They then used the evidence they found to form a holistic opinion to reach a grade for Overall Effectiveness.

This was generated from grades in the following five areas:

- Quality of Education
- Behaviour and Attitudes
- Personal Development
- Leadership and Management
- Sixth Form Provision

We received the rating of 'Good' overall and in all areas, with the exception of our Sixth Form, which was adjudged 'Outstanding'. Prior to this inspection, the Academy was awarded the overall judgement of 'Outstanding'. Nationally, between September 2023 and December 2023, 48% of 'Outstanding' schools were downgraded to 'Good'. This sets the tone for the challenges that schools have faced in retaining this judgement, and I am incredibly proud of the staff and students in achieving a positive inspection rating in this context.

Creating an environment where everyone feels safe and cared for is a central priority to me as the Head at Sandwell Academy. I am therefore very pleased that the inspection team identified many of the excellent aspects of the students' experience at the Academy, recognising our ethos and that 'relationships between pupils and staff are courteous and respectful.' Safeguarding is the most important thing that we do as a school, so it is great to read that in their judgement that 'pupils are happy and feel safe'.

In terms of the educational experience that students enjoy, I was delighted to see the inspection team recognise the 'raised expectations around learning and behaviour', and their noting that all students, including those with additional needs, access the full 'highly ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum'. I am particularly proud of the remark that Sixth Form students 'benefit greatly from this exceptional provision', identifying the fantastic work that is done to provide an outstanding post-16 offer.

The Personal Development of young people is critical within their education, and it is extremely pleasing to see the report identify that 'pupils can clearly explain their understanding of diversity and equality in society.' The report also recognises the range of leadership and mentoring opportunities available to students, which I believe contributes significantly to the relationships that students enjoy with each other and the staff at the Academy.

As with all reports, suggestions for things to work on are identified, and I am clear on our areas for development. Nothing that was proposed for us to work on was a surprise, and the items were part of our ongoing Academy Development Plan, but it has brought these matters into even sharper focus for us. We will increase consistency in how staff check on student understanding, by implementing a Department for Education endorsed assessment programme that is already in the planning phases now. Moreover, we



# Sandwell Academy

**Be Brave, Be Kind, Be Proud**

Headteacher: J Saunders

Halfords Lane, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B71 4LG

Tel: 0121 525 1700, Email: [info@sandwellacademy.com](mailto:info@sandwellacademy.com), Web: [www.sandwellacademy.com](http://www.sandwellacademy.com)



will be striving to improve oracy with a cross-Academy plan to develop student confidence and skill in their use of spoken English throughout their time at Sandwell Academy.

I would like to thank parents, carers and children who provided feedback through the Ofsted questionnaire. The Lead Inspector took me through the feedback in detail, and I was pleased to hear about the positive perspectives that so many parents and carers have of the school, as well as areas where we can do better. A comment that was shared which epitomises this school was provided by a parent and is included on the report itself, reading 'teachers go above and beyond to support students reaching their full potential.' I would suggest that this tells only part of the story, as the same can be said of every staff member as well, and I can ask for nothing more of them than that.

I am very excited about the challenges ahead as we strive to provide Sandwell Academy students, with the best education possible, and I thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr J Saunders**  
**Headteacher**



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Thomas Telford Multi Academy Trust  
Registered Office: Thomas Telford School, Old Park, Telford, Shropshire TF3 4NW  
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