

TRANSFORMING SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

GRACE FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT

2021-22



A YEAR OF EXPANSION IN THE MIDST OF UNCERTAIN TIMES

Working in an ever-changing context



There is no doubt that we are living in unprecedented times in the British Education system. As coronavirus restrictions were lifted across different parts of the UK, children and young people experienced a wide range of emotions and the impacts of their disrupted learning and wider social consequences are still rippling across the nation.

In the national picture of education recovery, school leaders have reported that students' level of behaviour, engagement, and ability to stay on task continue to present poorer than pre-pandemic.ⁱ Although recovery is slow, it is moving steadily in the right direction. The pandemic has had a negative impact on many students' mental health and emotional well-being, resulting in further concerns about lower resilience, confidence, and greater anxiety. Attendance has been severely disrupted and this raises further potential for challenges as warned by the Centre for Social Justice:

"The damage caused by lockdowns could not be clearer than in the case of school attendance: the pandemic has given rise to a generation of ghost children. If we're not careful, we are creating an Oliver Twist generation of children exposed to significant safeguarding hazards including tough domestic situations at home, online harms and joining county line gangs. Centre for Social Justice"ⁱⁱⁱ

When adding the rise in safeguarding concerns and disclosures alongside more red flags than ever before raised about domestic violence, one can then begin to comprehend the extent to which so many school communities feel stretched to their limits.

It is in this context that we continued to expand the work of Grace Foundation, much to the delight of those schools we are partnering with. We have been able to add capacity to more schools through the provision of our Ethos Teams. They work in synergy with partner schools to help develop the whole person, enhance student wellbeing, and improve student outcomes, through a bespoke ethos programme.

"The Ethos Team are a huge asset to the Academy." - External Safeguarding Review 2022

Every school in which we have a fully embedded team, there have not been so-called *ghost children*, largely due to the work of our Family Support Workers and collaboration with school Safeguarding teams. When students engage with the varied aspects of our Ethos Programme, we see they have better attendance, improved behaviour, make healthier choices, and experience raised aspirations as well as improved academic outcomes.

This year we have continued to expand into more Partner Schools and are now working across 10 schools with over 10,000 young people. Our team have delivered almost half a million student engagements to help make a difference. I would like to thank the Ethos Team, excellently led by our Operations Director, Dave Boden, for their hard work and creative responses to complex needs in these challenging days. Without their positive influence every single day, we would not be seeing the outstanding outcomes we see with young people.

Gary Spicer
Executive Director - Grace Foundation
September 2022



HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

What we do at a glance



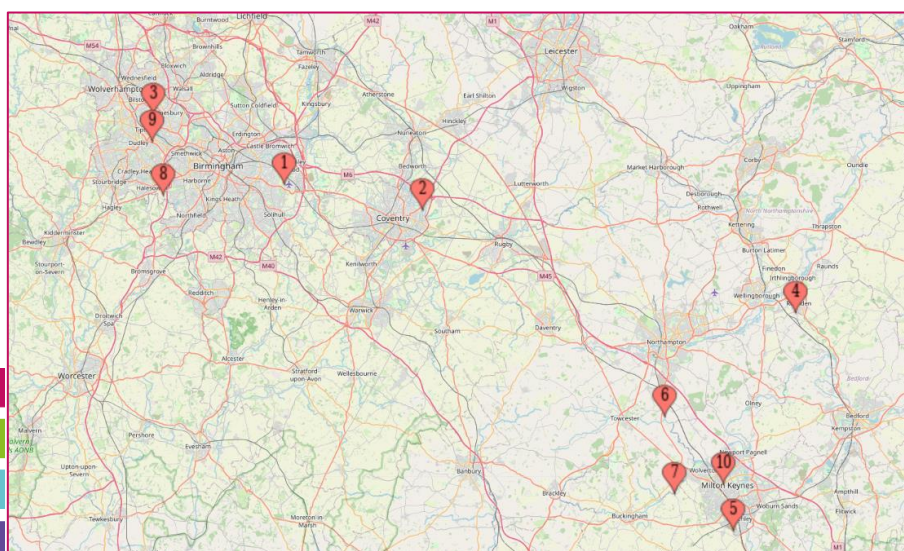
GROWTH IN PARTNER SCHOOLS

From 7 to 9 Schools in 2021-22 (With Partner School Number 10 launching September 2022)

We are now working in 9 Partner Schools across 3 Multi-Academy Trusts.ⁱⁱⁱ As Partner School Number 10 launches in September 2022 we are set to impact 10,000+ young people and their families every single day. Our planned growth is for 13 Partner Schools by the end of 2024, with two major business sponsors onboard, and many schools are making financial contributions for sustainable growth. Our growing number of Partner Schools are all secondary and based in the Midlands, Northamptonshire & the Milton Keynes area.



We work with schools from the inside out,
to help transform young people from the inside out



▲ 3 - 10

Partner schools
since 2019



▲ 2.5K - 10K

Student reach
since 2019



▲ 9 - 32

Staff members
since 2019



2021-22 Academic Year at a Glance

9 PARTNER SCHOOLS OPEN IN 2021-22 WITH A REACH OF 9000+ STUDENTS



TOVE
LEARNING TRUST

INVICTUS
Education Trust

THE MERCIAN
TRUST



WHAT WE HAVE PROVIDED OUR PARTNERS SCHOOLS IN 2021-22...

EVENTS, EDUCATION &
EXPERIENCES

TRAINING & RESOURCES

HOLISTIC ENRICHMENT

OUTCOMES BASED
INTERVENTION

SYNERGY WITH SCHOOL
PRIORITIES

Key Benefits for schools include:

- ➔ A Dedicated Ethos Team who helps improve the OFSTED Personal Development criteria
- ➔ A bespoke Ethos Programme that covers themes such as Developing Character & Values, Building Healthy Relationships and Understanding Christian Perspectives – linking with SMSC, PSHE, RSHE, RE, British Values, Character Education, Citizenship, Wellbeing and Safeguarding support.
- ➔ Wellbeing support that leads to raised aspirations, improved behaviour, better student progress and increased attendance levels



EMBEDDING OUR ETHOS TEAMS

We embed our Ethos Team including an Ethos leader, Youth Worker, and Family Support Worker, who add capacity to partner schools, and help drive long-term change



In each of our Partner Schools we fully integrate an Ethos Team. Each onsite team is supported by cross academy specialists, who offer strategic support to help them serve the school effectively.

ETHOS THEMES

DEVELOPING CHARACTER & VALUES	BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS	UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES
RAISING STUDENT ASPIRATIONS	LEARNING TO VALUE YOURSELF	EXPLORING THE BASICS OF BELIEF
FOSTERING RESPECT	IDENTIFYING THE QUALITIES OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS	DISCOVERING HOW THE CHRISTIAN FAITH WORKS
BUILDING RESILIENCE & HOPE	SKILLS FOR DIGITAL RELATIONSHIPS	UNDERSTANDING WHY THE CHRISTIAN FAITH MATTERS

The Grace Way

LIMITLESS POTENTIAL
WE CAN ACHIEVE SO MUCH MORE THAN WE THINK WE CAN

WORKING WITH SCHOOLS TO HELP STUDENT'S THRIVE

Our core aims are to develop the whole person, enhance student wellbeing and improve student outcomes

Outcome 1: Developing the whole person

Focus 1: Educating to Develop Character & Values

Studies find that values-based education improves student and teacher wellbeing, academic diligence, the teaching and learning environment, student-teacher relationships and partial parental and family participation.^{iv}

Highlights of our curriculum impact from 2021-22 include:

100% of students agreed that the **Year 7 Values Day** helped them to 'know and understand more' about the school values and how they can be demonstrated in their lives.

87% of students have a better understanding of what depression is and know "there are people out there who can help" after a targeted **Mental Health Workshop** led by our Creative Team.

9/10 of students said they understood more about the risks, responsibilities, and opportunities online after our Digital Tutor Time Sessions delivered by all Tutors

97% of students after our **Inspirational People Workshop** had a better understanding of why black history is important and were more aware of inspirational black people and the contributions they have made.



"In my 17 years working in Lord Grey, this is the best day we have ever had. I've never seen anything like it."
Staff Feedback after Culture Day

Revolution Manchester Case Study

“Handing out food to those in need made me understand how lucky I am and how helping those people makes a big difference...”



49 students, from five partner schools, embarked on a trip to Manchester for a 3-day programme of Social Action projects in and around the city. In partnership with Audacious Church, our students took part in various projects throughout each day that exposed them to the value of growing whilst giving. These projects included gardening, painting, and serving at a Homeless Banquet.



89% of students said they feel more compassionate towards others as a result of this trip

8/10 students said they have learnt more about how to work well in a team



“The most significant part of the trip for me was making friends, clearing the garden, and seeing the difference we made.”

Theme 2: Educating to Build Healthy Relationships

National Context

- Young people who do not receive effective RSE in schools were more likely to go on take more sexual risks, including intercourse before the legal age of consent, unprotected sex, and contraction of a sexually transmitted infection.^v
- Nationally, young people desire more relationships-based education. Close to 3 in 10 (28%) of young people had not learnt about 'how to tell if a relationship is healthy, including online', with a further 31% feeling they had not learnt enough about this topic.^{vi}
- One in four young people had viewed online porn by the age of 12. Over 65% of 15–16-year-olds have watched pornography.^{vii}
- National Reports of sex abuse between children double in two years^{viii}

Highlights of our curriculum impact from 2021-22 include:

9/10 students strongly agreed/agreed after the **Year 9 Off-Timetable Day** that they “feel better prepared to make healthy choices about sex and relationships.”

92% of students said they felt better prepared to make healthy choices about sex & relationships and 8/10 students feel more confident about their own values, and expressing them as a result of the **Post-16 Healthy Relationships Course**

97% of students said they “better understood the importance of healthy non-coercive relationships” after their **Year 10 Off-Timetable Day**

9/10 Year 11 students agreed that they are now more able to spot the warning signs of unhealthy relationships as a result of the **SAFE & SOUND Click & Play Digital Session**

One Year 7 student had an increase in Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, from a score of 3 (very unhealthy self-esteem) at the beginning of our **Girls Intervention Course** to 15 at the end (very healthy self-esteem)

100% of students on a **Lift Boys Course** said they agreed that it is important to delay sex until you are in a committed, faithful, respectful relationship

8/10 Students agreed that the **Behind the Post Digital** Tutor Time Sessions helped them understand the warning signs of unhealthy relationships



90 Staff from one of our Partner Schools were trained in how to deliver RSE by our BHR Team, empowering staff to:

- ✓ Deal with difficult situations
- ✓ Create a safe learning space
- ✓ Effectively plan for RSE lessons
- ✓ Answer student questions

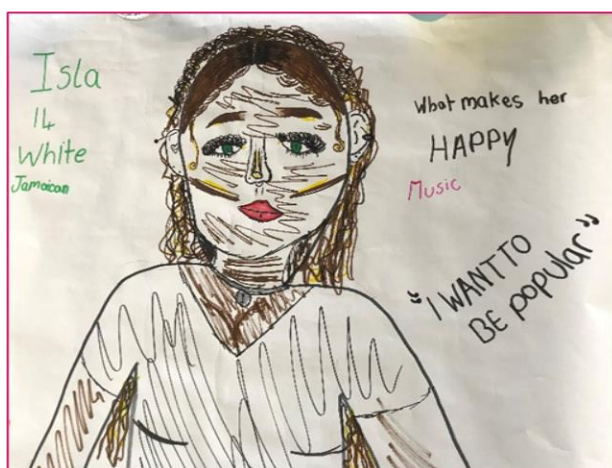
"A really informative and clear presentation. I found how to answer difficult questions the most useful."

100% of staff strongly agreed/agreed that the training was useful for the delivery of RSHE lessons

"I now know that instant feeling isn't as good as the long-lasting feeling with a partner..."

"I learnt about the importance of self-value, respect and mutual comfort within relationships."

"I have learnt that you shouldn't let anybody, or anything, change your views and morals to have sex..."



Images from Girls Group Intervention – students at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation

"I have learnt that porn can change the way you act and think. It can also be addictive."

"In future I will try to be more aware of what I'm saying / doing when posting online."

"I learned that I have the right to wait and say no..."

"I've always wanted to look like those models. Now I don't because I know they are photoshopped."



In September 2021, the work of Grace Foundation was featured as part of a BBC Panorama documentary called 'Who's Protecting Our Kids?'. Our Solihull Ethos Team was highlighted as an example of National good practice as part of the Grace Academy RSE curriculum.

Focus 3: Educating to Understand Christian Perspectives

National Context:

- Nearly two thirds (64%) of the UK adult population think that an education in religion and worldviews (or RE) is an important part of the school curriculum today. New research has revealed, with a further 65% agreeing that the subject has an impact on people's ability to understand each other in wider society.^{ix}

CHRISTMAS 2021 CAMPAIGN CASE STUDY

Over **1,100** Year 7 students across our partner schools took part in a Christmas lesson called *Stories of Hope*. This was part of a series of **13,000** student engagements with the Christmas Story in 2021.

97% of students understand more about why the Christmas story is a story of hope.

"It has made me really think about what I do and say to others to make them hopeful, which I don't think I have done before." **Year 7 Student**



EASTER EXPERIENCE 2022 CASE STUDY



There were over **18,418** engagements with the Easter Story in 2022 across our partner schools, including an Easter RE Lesson for **1,142** Year 7 students plus 2 x tutor sessions for all, enrichment activities, poster campaigns, visual installations, staff wellbeing events, parental support & so much more.

90% of students stated they understood why the Easter Story helps people find more purpose.

99% of students agreed that they now understand why Easter is so important to Christians.

"I learnt more about what Christians believe and why they celebrate Easter. It makes me think about what is important in my life and what I was born for..."

Year 9 student

Outcome 2: Improving Student Wellbeing

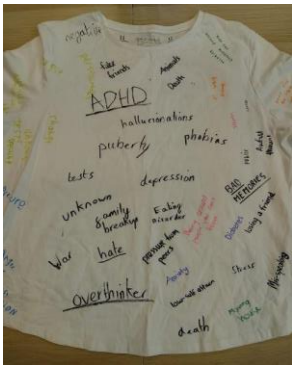
National Context

- Evidence from a study by *Public Health England*^x showed students with better health and wellbeing are likely to achieve better academically and that effective social and emotional competencies are associated with greater health and wellbeing, and better achievement.
- According to research from Young Minds “One in six children aged five to sixteen were identified as having a likely mental health problem in July 2021 - a significant increase from one in nine in 2017. That’s five children in every classroom.”^{xi}
- Catherine Roche, Chief Executive of Place2Be, has noted “What we’ve seen across our frontline services in UK schools, is rising numbers of young people struggling with anxiety, self-harm, eating difficulties and suicidal thoughts.”^{xii} Evidence is similar within our partner schools.

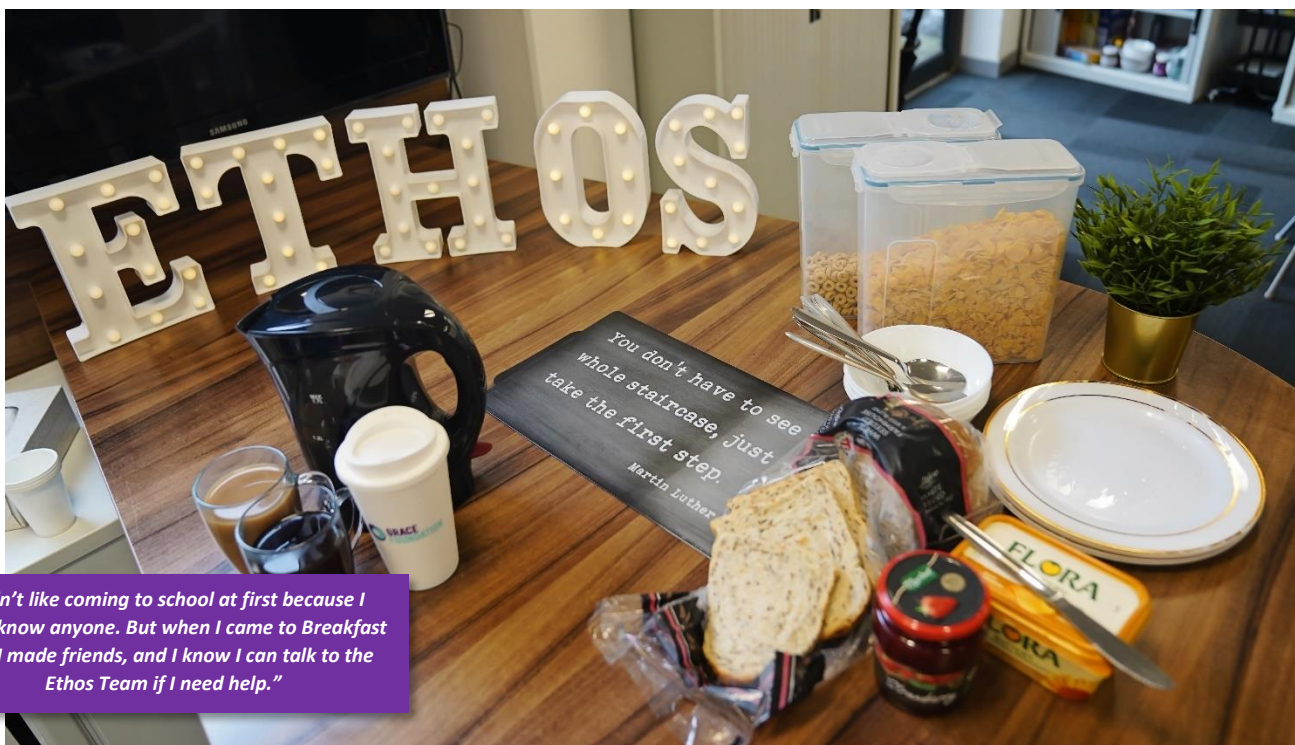
"Learning about a growth mindset has been really helpful to me. This course has made me feel happier in life."

"I already feel better just talking about things. I like that you are giving me things to think about and goals to work towards. I'm feeling like I can deal with certain things better..."

"I still get anxiety sometimes, but I know I have techniques that I can use to get through it."



"The course has helped me realise that setting goals is important and that its okay to talk if something is bothering me."



I didn't like coming to school at first because I didn't know anyone. But when I came to Breakfast Club I made friends, and I know I can talk to the Ethos Team if I need help."

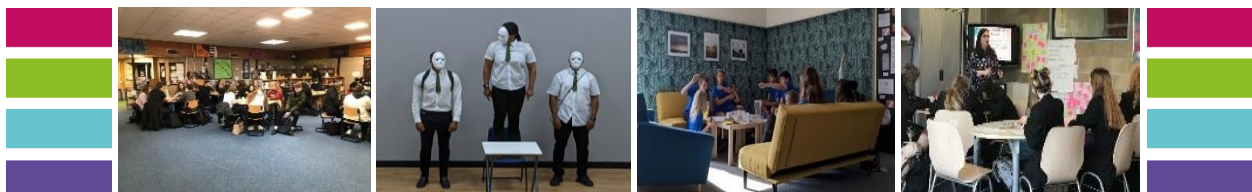
CREATING SAFE SPACES FOR STUDENTS

"Having the drop in is so important, it gives us a safe and relaxed place to be able to open up and express ourselves. I know when I walk in, that I can talk to anyone in the room. It has allowed me to make friends with people in my year and other years. Coming here every Tuesday has helped me to become more confident and outgoing as a person. Since I started coming in year 7, my anxiety has got better, I hardly notice it anymore and I now look forward to Lunch times." **Year 8 student**

"A lot of my friends at other schools don't have any of this, and so I love that our school cares about anti-bullying and mental health."

"Our school is so supportive. I know exactly where to go and exactly who to send my friend to if I was ever worried about this. I think it has helped people learn what sexual harassment can actually include."

"I used to never eat Breakfast. But now I eat it every day."



Case Studies of Impact from 2021-22

- **Student A** was experiencing serious anxiety issues and only accessing *two lessons* a day, but by the end of the intervention course she was attending *four lessons* a day.
- **Student B** had a consistently high level of behaviour points which decreased by 53% when comparing 3 weeks prior and 3 weeks since mentoring began. *“These mentoring sessions have helped me to understand the impact of my actions. I now know the importance of thinking before I act.”*
- **Student C** was referred due to low self-esteem, stress and anxiety which was affecting many relationships. The student’s understanding of how to deal with anxiety, find peace and experience joy increased by 75% on completion of the course. *“I feel more confident in myself and more confident knowing I’m not alone.”*
- **Student D** had significant reduction in self-harm and suicide attempts after becoming more positively engaged in school through interventions.
- **Student E** was referred due to serious behavioural issues. As a result of anger intervention sessions, the student attended all their classes and is not interrupting lessons or being removed from any classrooms.
- **Student F** was struggling to work through their process of grieving after losing a close family member and friend, which was impacting behaviour in school. Prior to starting one of our courses, they had on average 3 negative behaviour points each week. Since completing the course, the student is receiving 0 negative points each week.
- **Student G** was sharing during their final intervention session that they were 23 days free from self-harm. A goal that seemed impossible a few months ago. *“The other day I threw my blade away.... I am proud of myself...”*
- **Student H** had an attendance of 32% in Term 1 due to complex issues but due to family interventions, 1-1 mentoring, and graded exposure to lessons the last terms attendance was 90% and rising.



Our Family Support Workers engage with disadvantaged families which has a significant impact on student wellbeing



"I really enjoyed the parenting programme. It is very informative with a lot of practical solutions."

Family A

A family in debt was struggling for food resulting in the mum and student struggling with mental health problems. The student was unable to attend school more than a day or two a week. A plan was put in place including initial food parcels provided by a local church, children placed on Free School Meals and Uniform/PE kit provided. The Family Support Worker helped refer them to Housing Association, who supported with debt advice. Counselling was put in place for student and mum who were engaging with GP regarding their mental health. The two children ended the Autumn term with over 95% attendance.

Family B

A breakdown in family relationships led to a young person having to leave the family home. The student was living with their grandparent in a one-bedroom bungalow with no bed of their own. The Ethos Team response included weekly mentoring sessions, engaging the school nurse, accessing funding via Ethos Team to purchase clothing and successful escalation to gain support from children's services. This resulted in improved attendance, increased engagement with education, and better attitude towards learning which has further increased their motivation for the future.

Family C

Mum is a recovering alcoholic (sober) and our Family Support Worker has been able to offer emotional support for the student. They have provided uniform and applied for a successful grant for new furniture. Her daughter is now attending school most days and doing well, and the family no longer require social services support.

According to research from the Education Endowment Fund, the average impact of effective parental engagement can add an additional four months' attainment boost over the course of a year for each child involved.^{xiii}

Outcome 3: Advancing Student outcomes

National Context

- The results of an Oxford Impact Study conclude that, “Children with higher levels of emotional, behavioural, social, and school wellbeing, on average, have higher levels of academic achievement and are more engaged in school, both concurrently and in later years.”^{xiv}
- Most children want to leave school with a good education. Fifty-two per cent of all children aged nine to seventeen chose ‘having a good education’ as one of their top 5 future priorities^{xv}
- Children living in more deprived areas or attending schools with poor OFSTED ratings are more likely to be unhappy with life at school compared to other children.^{xvi}

“The integrated approach we have taken ensures that the team works seamlessly with the wider school, and within school priorities to inform and shape the Grace Foundation offer delivered. This allows it to be bespoke to the current student need. Without this team our students would be less likely to be seeing the improved outcomes that they do today.”

Darren Gelder, Principal of Grace Academy Solihull

Our Ethos Team help improve outcomes for individual students and improve overall OFSTED outcomes



“We have seen the tremendous benefit to our pupils and their families through the high-quality work of the Ethos Team provided by Grace Foundation. In particular, when this is embedded in the culture and practice of the school, we see an improvement in the academic achievement of our pupils.”

**Dr Jamie Clarke, CEO of Tove Learning Trust
OFSTED Inspector**



“The Grace Foundation Ethos Team are without doubt the ‘thing’ that brings the importance of children ‘thriving’ and not just ‘surviving’ to the forefront of education here. I am passionate about removing barriers to education for children and allowing them to flourish in their own character and have felt for many years that I have been facing an ever-uphill challenge, one that many times has made me question the integrity of the education children receive in this country. When I came to Grace Academy, I was excited to learn that I wouldn’t be ‘alone’ in that battle. I am not alone. We are blessed with the incredible Ethos Team here because they lead by example and have genuinely impacted on how all staff view and treat children. I cannot express my gratitude enough for this team – nor can our community.”

Natasha Whiles – Principal Grace Academy Coventry

Pic: Visiting Guest in Grace Academy Coventry



Three of our partner schools have been inspected in the 2021-22 Academic Year and have all been graded GOOD as a result of the hard work of school staff and contributions of a fully embedded Ethos Team.

GRACE ACADEMY DARLASTON | INSPECTED APRIL 2022



“Pupils learn about diversity, democracy, tolerance, and the rule of law in lessons and in assemblies, when external speakers give presentations. Pupils also follow an age-appropriate and comprehensive programme of relationships and sex education and health education.”

OFSTED REPORT – GOOD OVERALL

GRACE ACADEMY SOLIHULL | INSPECTED MAY 2022



“Leaders understand the needs of their community. They provide a range of support for parents, such as mental health workshops and parenting support. The daily breakfast club is well attended. Leaders ensured that this continued during the national lockdown and provided breakfast each day from community sites.”

OFSTED REPORT – GOOD OVERALL

LORD GREY ACADEMY | INSPECTED MAY 2022



“They (pupils) enjoy the meaningful opportunities related to character education and recognise how these help to develop them as rounded individuals.”

OFSTED REPORT – GOOD OVERALL



Pic: New Leasowes High School Ethos Room

References

- ⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-recovery-in-schools-spring-2022>
- ⁱⁱ <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/library/lost-but-not-forgotten>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Up to date as of September 2022 with more expansion planned from 2023 onwards
- ^{iv} <https://valuesbasededucation.com>
- ^v Government Briefing
- ^{vi} <https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/Young%20Peoples%20RSE%20Poll%202021%20-%20SEF%201%20Feb%202022.pdf>
- ^{vii} <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-36527681>
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- ^{ix} <https://www.cstg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2021/09/Religion-Worldviews-Survey-2021-FINAL.pdf>
- ^x <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-link-between-pupil-health-and-wellbeing-and-attainment>
- ^{xi} <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/mental-health-statistics/>
- ^{xii} <https://www.healthcareconferencesuk.co.uk/news/2022-5-24/record-high-number-of-children-treated-for-mental-health-problems-in-uk>
- ^{xiii} <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-engagement>
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- ^{xv} <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/the-big-ask-big-answers/>
- ^{xvi} <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/occ-education-findings-from-the-big-ask.pdf>