

Inspection of a good school: The Dukeries Academy

Whinney Lane, New Ollerton, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG22 9TD

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

Outcome

The Dukeries Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

As pupils enter the school, they are reminded of its inclusive culture by crossing the Rainbow Road. The staff know the pupils very well and have their best interests at heart. Pupils say that they are excited to attend this school and feel safe.

The new principal and other leaders have very high expectations of how pupils should conduct themselves around school. Teachers show pupils how to behave. They also teach pupils how to be proud of their own achievements and celebrate those of others. Pupils say that behaviour is improving and they can learn in all their lessons.

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum, underpinned by powerful knowledge as one of its six pillars. More pupils are studying a broader range of academic subjects as a result.

Pupils are taught about what bullying is. They say that it happens rarely. They are confident in reporting the smallest of issues. Pupils also said that they are confident that teachers will deal with any issues quickly.

Pupils enjoy taking part in extended curriculum sessions at the end of the day. In these sessions, they can do activities which interest them and develop them beyond academic study. Examples include singing in a choir, gardening and learning Japanese.

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

For many subjects, leaders have identified the most powerful knowledge that pupils need to know. In subjects such as English, geography and mathematics, this important knowledge is taught explicitly. The way their learning of this knowledge is carefully ordered allows pupils to build up what they know into larger ideas. In a few subjects, this is still developing. In these subjects, pupils are unable to recall or use important knowledge as effectively to build up their understanding of more complex ideas.

The curriculum is still being embedded across all year groups. In subjects such as English, where the curriculum is coherently planned across all years, pupils demonstrate detailed knowledge. This is not the case in all subjects. For example, in science, the curriculum is still developing. Pupils in key stage 4 did not study some important topics well enough in key stage 3. As a result, leaders are ensuring that some knowledge is taught again.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. All teachers set activities to check what pupils already know. In many subjects, including geography, teachers use this strategy well to check for misconceptions. Teachers address any misconceptions they identify before moving learning on. This does not work as well in subjects such as history, where teachers are not clear about the specific knowledge they are expected to teach.

Teachers adapt how they teach to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They use teaching assistants well. Teachers have access to important information about pupils with SEND that helps them understand how best to support these pupils. As a result, all pupils are taught the same ambitious curriculum.

Leaders have prioritised literacy and reading for all pupils. Pupils receive support from English intervention teachers to help them become more fluent readers. Teachers ensure that pupils experience a wide range of authors, cultures and styles of text. There are planned reading opportunities on Thursday afternoons. The reading curriculum is in the early stages of implementation.

The Extend, Enrich and Prepare programme supports pupils' wider development. All pupils select one activity which they complete for the year and another which changes every six to eight weeks. Pupils can have up to four one-to-one interviews with a careers adviser before they leave the school.

The programme of study in the sixth form helps students gain expert knowledge in the subjects they study. More students are going to university now. Students say that teachers help them achieve well. Students are independent and can discuss complex ideas due to the high level of knowledge they gain. They study extended projects and finance and can complete online course from universities. All Year 12 students undertake work experience. Students also form part of the diversity, equality and inclusivity group, which helps shape the wider curriculum at the school.

Staff are proud to work at the Dukeries Academy. They say that the school is well led and managed. Leaders consider staff workload and well-being before making decisions.

The trust has an accurate overview of the school's strengths and areas for development. As a result, trustees and local academy committee members are able to support and challenge leaders well. School leaders and delegates from the trust work together to develop the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at this school. Staff are trained weekly on the most important local and national safeguarding issues. Teachers use this training to teach pupils how to stay safe, including when online. Pupils know who to speak to if they have any concerns.

Staff know how to identify and report a welfare concern. Leaders respond quickly to any such concerns.

The designated safeguarding lead maintains accurate records of safeguarding incidents. Leaders work closely with external agencies to manage and help pupils that are at risk.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The new curriculum is in the process of being embedded in all subjects in all years. Where it is not yet fully embedded, pupils, particularly those in key stage 4, find it hard to recall knowledge they have learned in previous years. This can result in teachers having to spend time teaching knowledge again. Leaders should ensure that the new curriculum embeds securely in all subjects, so that pupils' knowledge builds over time.
- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the most important knowledge and concepts that pupils need to learn. In these subjects, pupils are not routinely able to identify how the knowledge they are learning connects to larger ideas. Leaders should ensure that teachers know the most important knowledge pupils should learn in their subject, so that they can support pupils to connect what they are learning to more complex concepts.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2016.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	139062
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10200201
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	689
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	64
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Pat Beanland
Principal	Ged Rae
Website	http://www.dukeriesacademy.atrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 and 12 October 2016

Information about this school

- A new principal was appointed in April 2020.
- The school uses three alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, science, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held a meeting with the leader of the sixth form and sixth-form students.

- Inspectors telephoned the alternative provision that the school uses.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the local academy committee and trustees.
- Inspectors spoke to the national director for education and an executive principal from the academy transformation trust.
- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including the school development plan.
- Inspectors took note of the responses received on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff questionnaires.
- To judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors read the school's relevant policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and met with the designated lead for safeguarding. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Imtiaz Patel

Ofsted Inspector

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