



The Dukeries Academy

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

Unique reference number (URN): 139062

Inspection report: 10 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Although attendance remains below national averages, particularly for vulnerable pupils, leaders have taken decisive action to secure improvement, which is now evident in the school's attendance information. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the barriers faced by some pupils and have implemented robust systems, targeted interventions and reward strategies to address these. These actions are beginning to have a sustained positive impact. Pupils' attitudes towards regular attendance are improving, and engagement with support is increasing. Leaders promote a clear message that attendance is everyone's responsibility, which is understood by staff and pupils. While attendance remains an area for development, leaders are focused and persistent in sustaining this upward trend.

Behaviour across the school has improved and is generally calm and orderly. Most pupils settle quickly to learning and demonstrate positive attitudes in lessons. Well-established routines help pupils engage promptly with their work, and positive relationships between staff and pupils underpin a respectful classroom climate. Revised behaviour systems, alongside the inclusion base, have reduced incidents of disruption and improved conduct across the school. Staff have clear expectations and usually address low-level disruption effectively, although occasional disruption remains in a small number of lessons. Pupils say bullying is taken seriously and responded to quickly, and that staff challenge inappropriate language. Behaviour during social times is positive and supported by active supervision.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have made significant improvements to the ambitious curriculum, which clearly identifies the key knowledge and concepts pupils are expected to learn. The curriculum is generally sequenced well, enabling pupils to build knowledge within and across year groups. Leaders are aware that implementation is not yet consistently strong and continue to take action to improve practice.

Teaching is usually structured and purposeful. Teachers typically demonstrate secure subject knowledge and explain new learning clearly. Lessons commonly begin with recall activities, and pupils' books show a consistent approach to revisiting prior learning, alongside increasing opportunities for extended writing. Assessment is generally used appropriately to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and support them to catch up.

Teachers are increasingly using the agreed teaching approaches, including modelling, worked examples, visualisers and targeted questioning. These approaches help pupils to understand key concepts, for example when evaluating sources in history or structuring responses in English. However, the quality of implementation is not yet consistent across the school. While routines for checking pupils' understanding are established, they are not always used effectively enough to ensure all pupils secure the intended learning.

Adaptive teaching continues to develop. In many lessons, teachers provide appropriate support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, this practice is

not yet embedded consistently across all subjects. Leaders are supporting staff to strengthen this further.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders responsible for inclusion work collaboratively and draw on trust support to strengthen systems across the school effectively. They identify pupils' needs accurately, using a range of assessments to ensure support is appropriate. Staff receive regular, relevant training that improves their understanding of how to adapt teaching and meet pupils' needs.

Leaders' pupil premium strategy is well planned and addresses key barriers to learning. Leaders review its impact frequently and take sensible next steps to refine support. Strong partnership working with external professionals ensures that additional funding is used effectively for pupils known or previously known to social care. Staff use 'pupil passports' to understand pupils' vulnerabilities and plan suitable classroom strategies.

Teachers typically adapt learning through visual modelling, technology and adjusted resources, enabling pupils to access the intended curriculum to varying degrees of success. Leaders monitor interventions and pupils' progress, though they recognise the need for deeper analysis to target resources more precisely. The inclusion base provides positive support for reintegration and contributes to improving pupils' levels of attendance and their behaviour. Parental engagement remains a focus for leaders who are building positive relationships to ensure that families feel valued and included. Leaders promote an inclusive culture that enables pupils to generally participate successfully in school life.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the needs of the community they serve and remain committed to ensuring that all pupils receive a purposeful education that prepares them well for future pathways. Their moral purpose is evident in actions such as providing a breakfast club, which offers pupils a calm and structured start to the school day.

Leaders take difficult decisions in the best interests of pupils. Although some decisions have affected aspects of curriculum delivery, they have acknowledged the challenges and taken practical steps to address them. Early career and trainee teachers report feeling well supported, and most staff speak positively about leaders' consideration of their workload and wellbeing. Leaders provide appropriate training and monitor workload carefully, creating a professional environment where staff can develop their practice.

Leaders show sustained determination to remove the barriers that limit pupils' access to their education. They take timely and purposeful action, using what they know about the school to identify where improvement is most needed. Leaders have strengthened systems for monitoring practice and use this information to guide targeted professional development. Their work focuses on securing greater consistency so that all pupils benefit from effective teaching.

Leaders are clear-sighted about the scale of the challenge, particularly in relation to outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. They continue to reduce barriers to learning and

prioritise building constructive relationships with families, recognising that greater parental engagement will support improvement.

The local governing board and trust leaders provide the school with effective support and appropriate challenge and ensure that statutory responsibilities at both trust and school level are met effectively. They understand the school's context, know its priorities and maintain effective strategic oversight, assuring themselves that decisions are in pupils' best interests and that staff wellbeing is considered.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that personal development is thoughtfully embedded across the curriculum and wider school life. The school's core values underpin pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and support the promotion of fundamental British values. A wide range of enrichment opportunities, such as the chaplaincy café, the Year 7 carol service and themed culture events, broaden pupils' experiences and strengthen their sense of community and belonging. Educational visits, performances and subject-based trips enhance cultural awareness and support learning beyond the classroom. Religious education is well established and enables pupils to explore moral, ethical and cultural issues in depth. The culture curriculum strengthens personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), including safeguarding, emotional regulation and staying safe online, with appropriate adaptation for disadvantaged pupils.

Assemblies follow a carefully planned sequence of themes that promote respect, diversity and social responsibility. Weekly messages from the headteacher reinforce these priorities and provide a consistent forum for celebrating success and addressing key messages, including attendance, behaviour and inclusion. PSHE is taught across key stages, and teachers regularly check how securely pupils understand and retain key learning, using this information to address misconceptions and adapt provision. Tutor time supports pupils' personal development through reading, reflection and structured discussion, building confidence and engagement.

Careers education is purposeful and inclusive. Pupils benefit from employer encounters, mock interviews, apprenticeship visits and work experience. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have equal access, with tailored guidance and alternative opportunities where needed.

A well-established pastoral system supports pupils' wellbeing effectively. Targeted interventions, including therapeutic support, contribute to a calm and inclusive culture in which pupils feel safe, known and supported.

Pupils benefit from a broad range of well-resourced extra-curricular activities, including football for girls and boys, drama, music, science, technology, engineering and mathematics clubs and revision sessions. These opportunities promote confidence, teamwork and aspiration, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, and support positive engagement with school life.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Examination results remain well below national averages, and attainment fell further in 2025. Although leaders highlight that Progress 8 scores improved in 2024, showing early impact of improved teaching, this improvement has not led to secure results for most pupils. The school's internal systems and work in books suggests outcomes are starting to rise, but this is not consistent across subjects.

Gaps in pupils' learning continue to hold them back. Some pupils with higher prior attainment can use what they have learned, but some struggle to work on their own and need a lot of support. Many pupils are not confident in their previous learning, making it difficult to build new knowledge. Long periods of missed schooling have added to these gaps, and support to close them is not consistent.

The quality and presentation of pupils' work varies. Feedback from staff is not always specific enough to help pupils improve. As a result, some pupils are not yet ready for the next stage of their education.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils experience a generally calm and orderly environment where routines help them settle to learning. They feel safe in school and know who to approach for help. Pupils report that behaviour has improved, particularly since the introduction of the inclusion base, and that staff usually act quickly when low-level disruption happens. They say that bullying, including name calling, is taken seriously and dealt with effectively.

Pupils' enjoyment of learning varies. Many can describe what they are working on and explain how new content links to what they have been taught before. Teachers' use of modelling, worked examples and explanations generally helps pupils to understand new ideas. Some pupils, especially those with higher prior attainment, use their knowledge confidently. However, gaps in previous learning mean that some struggle to work independently or recall prior content securely. This affects how well they achieve across subjects and how well prepared they are for their next stage of education.

Pupils' sense of belonging is supported by leaders' welcoming approach. Staff use 'pupil passports' and a range of assessments to understand individual needs and vulnerabilities. Many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from adaptations that help them take part in lessons, although this is not yet consistent. Pupils who attend the inclusion base value the support that helps them reintegrate into lessons. Most pupils interact positively with peers during social times, and staff supervision helps maintain a respectful atmosphere.

Although attendance is improving, it remains low for some groups of pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable. This limits how far they can benefit from the school's curriculum and wider opportunities. Pupils access a broad range of enrichment activities, including

cultural events and after-school clubs. These experiences help them develop confidence, teamwork and an understanding of their role in the school and wider community.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that shared expectations for teaching are fully embedded so that pupils experience consistently effective instruction across all subjects and classes.
 - Leaders should strengthen routines for checking understanding so that teachers identify gaps accurately for the whole class before moving learning on.
 - Leaders should sharpen their strategies to support pupils to develop secure foundation knowledge and skills so that gaps in attainment begin to narrow rapidly.
 - Leaders should continue to refine attendance strategies so that improvement is more consistent, particularly for vulnerable pupils whose attendance remains below national figures.
 - Leaders should continue strengthening relationships with families so that parental engagement more consistently supports pupils' learning and attendance.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Academy Transformation Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark McCourt, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Pat Beanland.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with senior leaders, staff, parents and pupils, as well as trustees and trust staff during the inspection.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses 6 unregistered and one registered alternative provisions.

Since the previous inspection, a new principal has been appointed.

Principal: Mike Brett

Lead inspector:

Nyree Parker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Susan Vasey, Ofsted Inspector

Matthew Sammy, Ofsted Inspector

Julie Sheppard, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 10 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

762

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

750

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

42.25%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.97%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

21.00%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	21.0%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	28.2%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	32.1%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	34.8	46.0	Below
2023/24 (final)	39.3	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	41.1	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.28	-0.03	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	-0.46	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	11.3%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	7.3%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	12.2%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	29.2	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	29.7	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	32.4	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.65	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.96	-0.57	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	11.3%	53.1%	-41.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	7.3%	53.1%	-45.8 pp
2022/23 (final)	12.2%	52.4%	-40.2 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	29.2	50.4	-21.2
2023/24 (final)	29.7	50.0	-20.3
2022/23 (final)	32.4	50.3	-17.9

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.65	0.16	-0.82
2022/23 (final)	-0.96	0.17	-1.13

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	83%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	85%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	78%	94%	Below

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	28.33	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	17.78	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	24.47	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	-0.3	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-1.0	0.0	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	9.6%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	10.9%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	9.6%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	28.8%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	33.2%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	30.3%	26.5%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional ●

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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