

The Dukeries Academy

Whinney Lane, New Ollerton, Newark NG22 9TD

Inspection dates

11–12 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The excellent leadership of the principal has led to rapid and significant improvement since the previous inspection. Senior leaders work effectively. Collectively, they have created a culture of high aspiration.
- Across a wide range of subjects, outcomes have improved and the latest school performance information demonstrates that this trend is set to continue in 2017.
- The quality of teaching has improved considerably across the school since the previous inspection. This has led to good progress for the majority of pupils currently in Years 7 to 11. However, the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Effective tracking systems enable leaders and teachers to check pupils' progress accurately and provide good-quality support for those who fall behind.
- The feedback that pupils are given about their work has improved well to help pupils make more progress in their learning, but with some variation. This is because a few teachers are still not adhering fully to the school's policy and opportunities are missed for pupils to benefit from the feedback they receive.
- The sixth form is good. Improved systems to check on academic progress and the quality of teaching in the rest of the school are now effectively raising standards in the sixth form.
- Attendance has improved well for all groups of pupils. This is also the case for pupils who are persistently absent.
- Leaders and managers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is now good. Pupils take a pride in their appearance and conduct themselves in a sensible manner both in lessons and around the school.
- The average progress pupils make in eight of their GCSEs was similar to other pupils nationally. However, the progress made by the most able pupils is not good enough.
- There are inconsistencies among leaders in the monitoring of how rigorously school policies are applied, such as the feedback policy.
- Good arrangements for pupils' health, safety and welfare mean that they are kept safe and benefit well from effective support.
- The school's sponsor, along with the governing board, supports and challenges leaders well so that the school continues to improve. They share the principal's ambition to be the very best.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - raising the expectations of what most-able pupils can achieve in lessons
 - providing more consistent challenge for most-able pupils so that they make better progress in all subjects
 - ensuring that the feedback and assessment policy is consistently followed by all staff.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management by:
 - Ensuring that all senior and middle leaders check rigorously that the school's policies are consistently applied in order to maintain the rate of improvement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal's ambition, skills and determination are key drivers in the school's improvement. He has a clear vision for the school and constantly seeks to further improve the quality of education. He is supported well by the vice-principal and there is now a culture of high aspiration.
- The school has improved considerably since the previous inspection and changes in the leadership at all levels have increased the rate of improvement. Many of the senior team and middle leaders are relatively new to their roles but the principal has successfully communicated his vision and they are playing their part in the school's transformation.
- Leaders' approaches to improve the quality of teaching are having a clear impact. The Dukeries Academy 'lesson charter for outstanding teaching every day' has raised the quality of teaching and has accelerated the rates of pupils' progress.
- Opportunities for continued professional development provided in the school and within the Academy Transformation Trust are a strength of the school and valued by teachers. Those new to the school and to the profession are exceptionally positive about the support they receive.
- Leaders ensure that teachers' performance is well managed. Procedures have been tightened and teachers' targets and professional development are linked effectively to the school's action plan and to expectations for progress. The school links teachers' pay progression closely to successful performance. Overall, teachers are held to account, and underperformance is challenged effectively.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and personalised to meet pupils' needs well. This includes courses for individual pupils in order to follow their desired careers paths. Courses on offer are regularly reviewed and changes are made to help pupils maximise the progress they make. An appropriate range of academic and vocational courses ensures that pupils have equality of access and opportunity.
- The school promotes pupils' personal development effectively, for example, through the array of extra-curricular activities, clubs, trips and charity work opportunities. These include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the sixth-form debating competition and trips to the Houses of Parliament and the Peruvian Andes.
- The school has effective methods of measuring how well it is doing and identifying areas where improvements still need to be made. Subject and progress leaders are increasingly effective, but in a few areas, leaders have not made sure that the school policies are being applied consistently. Therefore, there is some variation in the quality of teaching and progress pupils make, especially the most able pupils.
- Leaders check the use and impact of additional funding carefully and effectively. As a result of leaders' actions, outcomes are rapidly improving for disadvantaged pupils. Year 7 catch-up funding (additional government funding for those pupils who did not reach the expected levels in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6) is used effectively.
- Staff morale is very good and pupils appreciate the positive changes to their school. Responses to the staff and parent questionnaires show that they recognise and support leaders' actions. As one parent said, 'I have seen a vast improvement over the last few years and things have been improving year on year. I am very happy that I chose for

both of my children to attend the Dukeries Academy and can only congratulate them on their progress.'

- Leaders' actions to improve attendance and exclusion rates for all groups of pupils have been effective.
- The sponsor has been instrumental in the rate of improvement the school has made to date by providing effective support and challenge to leaders and managers. Through monthly 'Progress Board' meetings, they receive regular updates on how well the school is doing and hold the leadership and management of the school to account. The sponsor provides very effective support for the school, for example through the academy improvement director. It has brokered support to different subject areas to make sure that the school's information is accurate.
- Leaders keep close checks on those pupils attending off-site, alternative provision. They ensure that these pupils are safe, and attend and behave well.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Events, including assemblies and visiting speakers, extend this aspect of the pupils' education well. For example, pupils recently learned about the subject of forced marriage during an address by a human rights campaigner. Pupils learned about democracy during their own 'Brexit' vote. A range of well-planned activities ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school's personal, social and health education programme underpins pupils' good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and emotional and mental well-being.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school has undergone significant changes since the previous inspection, including a new chair and vice-chair of the governing board. They provide rigorous challenge to school leaders and provide effective support.
- There is now a greater degree of interrogation when looking at information provided by the school, and governors are much more focused on holding leaders to account for any underperformance of pupils.
- A range of training has been attended. Link governors visit the school regularly, holding discussions with leaders and challenging the school on a regular basis. This has led to a higher degree of understanding about how the school works and to greater accountability.
- There is now much stronger and effective oversight of how additional funding is spent and governors rigorously monitor the impact it has.

Safeguarding

- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective because there are rigorous systems that staff implement consistently. Policies are up to date and reviewed regularly. There is a strong culture of vigilance across the school. Staff receive regular training to ensure that they understand their roles with regard to safeguarding children, including protecting them from the risk of extremism and child sexual exploitation. Governors have received safeguarding training and are fully aware of their responsibilities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the time of the previous inspection in response to effective leadership at all levels. Generally, there are much

greater expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Therefore, pupils are now making good progress and pupils' past underperformance is being tackled effectively.

- Teachers' strong subject knowledge underpins good planning of learning tasks and better use of resources that pupils find interesting. Effective questioning establishes whether pupils have understood new work or if they need further help with it.
- Teaching is now good overall throughout the school. In some subjects, for example history, religious studies, physics, biology and chemistry, teaching is often better than good and enables pupils to achieve GCSE results that are well above average. Although teaching is now effective in mathematics and technology and pupils are making accelerated progress, previous weak teaching means that GCSE results are not high enough.
- Pupils and staff show respect for each other, resulting in positive attitudes to learning. Pupils greatly appreciate the dedication of their teachers. Several different groups of pupils told inspectors that the best thing about their school was their teachers. The presentation of work in pupils' books has improved well and demonstrates how pupils now exhibit much more pride in their work and their learning.
- The accurate and comprehensive tracking system clearly shows the progress that individuals and groups of pupils are making currently. It quickly identifies those who are not making enough progress and triggers extra support to enable them to catch up.
- Additional adults in lessons make a very good contribution to the improvement of pupils' progress. Teaching assistants know their pupils well and use their initiative to support individuals and groups effectively. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- Teachers, trained well by leaders, support the development of pupils' literacy skills effectively. These skills are developed across a wide range of subjects, such as history and religious studies.
- There is now a culture in the school where teachers have much greater expectations of what most pupils can and should achieve. Leaders set ambitious targets but teachers do not routinely challenge the school's most-able pupils, including the most-able disadvantaged, sufficiently to make sure that progress is rapid enough and targets are reached.
- Assessment and feedback on pupils' work are much better than at the time of the previous inspection. There are many examples of exemplary practice, where teachers are fully embracing the school's policy. Feedback is now effective overall, but there are still occasions when practice does not come up to the high expectations and opportunities are lost for pupils to improve their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' positive views of school are reflected in their comments to inspectors. Pupils confirm that the school teaches them about e-safety and potential dangers from drugs, alcohol and radicalisation. Pupils report that they feel safe.

- Pupils are polite and cheerful. Many of them stopped to chat to the inspectors and held doors open for them.
- Progress leaders are very positive about changes to the leadership structure, giving them a more coherent overview of pupils' academic progress and well-being. This positive view is mirrored by parents. One parent told inspectors, 'My daughter has settled in well at this school and staff are professional and approachable and reward good behaviour. I feel she is valued as an individual. She has made progress in her learning and is now a much more confident individual.'
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying including cyber bullying. Pupils say bullying is rare and they believe bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils are proud of their school, and wear their uniforms smartly. They are especially proud to wear the 'gold ties' they are awarded for achievement in subjects.
- Pupils talk positively about the range of planned opportunities in the curriculum and the extra-curricular activities that develop their skills and interest. They speak passionately about the learning opportunities in the 'innovation room' and the Combined Cadet Force and how these activities help develop their confidence.
- A cohesive programme of careers education throughout the school is effectively preparing all pupils, including and those at risk of disengagement, for the next stage of their education, employment or training. The last destination information shows that almost all pupils went on to education, employment or training.
- Pupils talk confidently about their transition from primary school. They are well supported and this enables them to settle quickly into their new classes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It is much better than at the time of the previous inspection because of the introduction of a system of clear rewards and sanctions for pupils.
- Around school and in lessons, pupils' conduct is good. They move around the site in a calm and orderly fashion. The school is well maintained and even at the end of a busy lunchtime, there is very little litter.
- Lessons start punctually and the great majority of pupils are polite and respectful to each other and to staff. During lessons, pupils listen carefully to each other's views and opinions and want to achieve.
- Relationships between pupils and adults in the school are impressive. Learning takes place with little or no disruption because a real sense of working together exists.
- Leaders are determined that all pupils stay in school to learn. The effectiveness of the 'Success Centre' means that there have been no permanent exclusions and the proportion of pupils excluded has reduced significantly in the last two years.
- The leadership of behaviour and attendance is strong, with clear and consistently used systems that pupils understand well. Discussions with teachers and pupils indicate that behaviour has improved hugely in recent years.
- Attendance has improved overall and it is now close to the national average.
- Attendance had also improved for the majority of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This has contributed to the improvements in the progress made by this group of pupils. This is also the case for pupils who are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Achievement in all year groups across the school has improved rapidly because of good teaching. Leaders have made this a priority and, as a result, current pupils are making good progress overall. Work seen in pupils' books supports this judgement. The improvements in overall GCSE outcomes in 2016 look set to continue based on the school's own assessment information.
- Average progress that pupils made in eight of their GCSEs in 2016 was similar to other pupils nationally. Rapid progress made in English means that attainment is now similar to the national average. The number of pupils who achieve grades A* to C in both English and mathematics at key stage 4 increased in the last three years and difference with the national average is decreasing.
- Improved leadership and teaching has resulted in improved GCSE outcomes in nearly all subjects, especially in English, history, religious studies, biology, physics, chemistry, construction, and health and social care.
- Effective support enables pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make progress that is at least in line with their peers. As a result of improved tracking of pupils' learning, extra support means that differences in the progress made between boys and girls are reducing.
- Progress of disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 improved significantly in 2016 compared to 2015. The proportion of pupils who achieved a GCSE in both English and mathematics has doubled. Leaders and teachers have a clear focus, and improvements in the pupils' attendance have helped to accelerate the progress they make. Pupils entering the school with below-average standards in English and mathematics are supported well with the Year 7 catch-up funding. High-quality support from teachers and teaching assistants helps these pupils catch up quickly.
- The school promotes reading well for all pupils. There is now a strong focus on improving all pupils' literacy skills throughout the school.
- Since the previous inspection, many new subject leaders have been appointed. They have been instrumental in the improvements but historic underperformance has meant that a few subjects have not achieved as well as they should have in 2016. This was particularly the case for mathematics. Achievement in mathematics is improving and pupils currently in the school are making good progress. The latest school performance information demonstrates that results will continue to improve in 2017 because pupils are benefiting from better teaching.
- Pupils work hard and told inspectors that they want to do well in their subjects. Inspection evidence shows that teachers do not have high enough expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve. Therefore, in many subjects their progress is not strong enough because they are not challenged sufficiently.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership and management of the sixth form are effective because leaders have a clear vision for the sixth form. Improvements have been made to the quality of teaching and the range of courses offered. Systems that have brought about improvement in the main school are now being implemented in the sixth form. A greater proportion of students are now staying in the school's sixth form.

- Outcomes in the sixth form are improving. In 2015, students studying vocational programmes made good progress, and the latest school performance information confirms that this is also the case in 2016. Average A-level grades have improved since 2015 and are now in line with the national average. More students are achieving higher grades. As a result, a higher proportion went on to university and into apprenticeships in 2016 than ever before.
- Students show good attitudes to learning and speak positively about the support and guidance they receive. Students value the opportunities that exist to be involved in supporting younger pupils and to take on leadership roles, for example as 'house captains'. They are positive about fundraising for local and national charities.
- The curriculum prepares students well for the next steps in their learning journey. A range of non-qualification activities contributes well to students' personal development and well-being. The enrichment programme has been improved to meet the needs of students fully so that they know how to stay safe and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Students entering the sixth form without good passes in mathematics and English are well supported and achieve well in resit examinations, ensuring that they catch up with these required qualifications.
- Overall, the school meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programme. Opportunities are in place to develop students' understanding of the world of work and students are well supported with work experience opportunities and how to move on to university courses.
- Higher expectations for attendance, punctuality, behaviour and dress code have resulted in good attendance. The school attributes the increased drop in retention rates between Years 12 and 13 to these greater demands on students.
- Safeguarding is effective in the sixth form because teachers are vigilant and appropriate systems are followed consistently.

School details

Unique reference number	139062
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10019572

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	740
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Empson
Principal	Ian Barton
Telephone number	01623860545
Website	www.dukeriesacademy.atrust.org.uk
Email address	i.barton@dukeries.atrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with DfE guidance on what academies should publish.
- The Dukeries Academy was established on 1 January 2013. It is sponsored by the Academy Transformation Trust.
- The current principal took up post in January 2014. Since the last inspection changes include the appointment of a new vice-principal, a restructure of the senior leadership team, a number of new appointments and staff changes, and a new chair and vice-chair of the governing board.
- The academy is a smaller-than-average, mixed secondary school with a sixth form.

- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average.
- Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- In September 2014, the school established the 'Success Centre' that is on site. This provides an alternative curriculum offer for students who may be at risk of exclusion.
- A few students at the school attend alternative provision at The Good Apple and YESS.
- In 2015 and in 2016, the school met the current government floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 4 and the interim standards for 16 to 19 study programmes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made visits to 35 lessons. Many of these were observed jointly with the principal and other senior leaders. In addition, inspectors also visited tutor time, assemblies and the Combined Cadet Force parade.
- During the inspection, meetings were held with the principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers new to the school, the special educational needs coordinator, the leader of the 16 to 19 provision, two governors as well as the academy improvement director and the chief executive from the academy's sponsor.
- Inspectors met formally with three groups of pupils. They spoke with pupils about their learning in lessons and their experiences in school. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's review of its performance, plans for improvement, safeguarding procedures and incident logs. The lead inspector looked at the records from meetings of the governing board and the sponsor's progress board.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's information about pupils' progress and the standards achieved. In addition, a scrutiny of pupils' work was undertaken.
- An inspector spoke to staff working at each of the centres of alternative provision.
- Inspectors reviewed 45 responses to a staff questionnaire recently conducted by the academy and the 25 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 12 free-text responses.

Inspection team

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Matthew Sammy	Ofsted Inspector

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