

Inspection of The Farnley Academy

Chapel Lane, Farnley, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS12 5EU

Inspection dates: 22–24 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending The Farnley Academy. The school is a calm and well-organised place to learn. Many pupils work hard. They behave well and are keen to succeed. However, a minority of pupils do not have such positive attitudes.

If poor behaviour does happen, teachers deal with it. This allows other pupils to get on with their learning. But some pupils who do not behave well spend too much time in the isolation room. A number of pupils attend alternative provision. Leaders, including governors, have not kept a careful enough check to make sure that alternative provision is the best option for these pupils.

Pupils told us they enjoy positions of responsibility in the student leadership team. They like having a say in some of the decisions the school makes. Many pupils take part in the large number of after-school activities available to them.

Staff have very high expectations of the behaviour and academic achievement of pupils. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have the chance to study a full range of subjects.

Pupils told us they feel safe and well cared for in school. Every pupil we spoke to told us that bullying is rare. They said that, if it does happen, staff sort it out so that it stops.

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

The school provides a good quality of education. Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They do not shy away from expecting pupils to achieve as much as possible. Leaders have thought about what pupils should learn, when it would be best for them to learn it and why. Most pupils achieve well.

Clear plans for all subjects outline what pupils should be taught and when. Teaching supports pupils to build up their knowledge. This helps them with their future learning. For example, in Year 8 English, pupils learned how writers sometimes hint about what is to come later in a story. In Year 10, pupils used this knowledge to help them to understand more about a character in the book, 'Of Mice and Men'. In all subjects, teachers regularly check whether pupils have remembered recent work. This helps teachers to identify gaps in what pupils know and have understood. Teachers then plan lessons which allow pupils to catch up.

Leaders are aware it may not be appropriate for every pupil to study a humanities subject and a foreign language at GCSE level. But they encourage pupils to do so if it is the right choice for them. Leaders have listened to the pupils about which language they would like to study. Because of this, Spanish is now offered. More pupils are beginning to study a language to GCSE level.

Pupils' personal development is promoted exceptionally well. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to express their own opinions and discuss current issues with each other. They do this with confidence, respecting each other's viewpoints. Inspectors could see from the words and deeds of pupils that everyone is valued at the school. Pupils learn from any mistakes they make. This helps them to be better prepared for their next challenge.

There are lots of activities for pupils to join beyond their lessons. Many of these activities link to curriculum subjects, for example science and technology, music, drama, art and physical education (PE). Many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, take up these opportunities. Pupils are not afraid to take on responsibilities. They enjoy leadership roles, such as becoming members of the student leadership team. Pupils take part in school productions and a range of educational visits. For example, the school is planning a funded visit to Tokyo for 50 pupils, in 2021, to investigate the impact of the Olympics. Pupils told inspectors that the school is a great place to be.

The majority of pupils with SEND get the support in classrooms that they need. This helps them to focus on their learning and achieve well in their subjects. For a minority of pupils with SEND this is not as successful. A minority of disadvantaged pupils do not benefit from the support they receive either. The school uses alternative provision to meet the needs of some pupils.

Although leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, they do not ensure that pupils' behaviour and attitudes are consistently good. A small number of pupils do not engage in their learning as positively as they should. There is more that could be done for some so that they are able to remain in the school. A small number of pupils are isolated from main lessons too often. Several parents have chosen to home educate their children. Other pupils are moved from The Farnley Academy onto the roll of the trust's alternative provision. Leaders could not convincingly explain why it was in each pupil's best interests to move to the roll of the alternative provision, particularly during Year 11.

Governors and trustees keep a careful check on the school's academic performance. They challenge leaders to improve some aspects of the school. However, the local governing body and trustees have not had sufficient oversight of the school's use of alternative provision and the reasons why pupils leave the school's roll. Governors do not check well enough on the school's strategies to improve pupils' behaviour. They have not effectively challenged leaders to reduce the number of pupils who are isolated from the classroom.

Leaders consider staff workload. The trust and the school provide the support and the development which staff need. All staff told us they are happy to be working at the school and they feel supported by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

School leaders ensure that pupils are safe. The record of the checks on adults in school is thorough and compliant with the legal requirements. These checks make sure that adults are suitable to work with children. Staff and governors are regularly trained so that they know how to keep pupils safe. There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Pupils feel safe and they are confident staff will support them and help them with any concerns.

Leaders typically undertake appropriate checks to ensure that pupils are safe when they attend alternative provision. However, in one case, leaders did not check whether an alternative provider was registered to accommodate the pupils who were attending.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and governors should ensure that alternative provision is only considered after all options to support pupils in mainstream education have been exhausted. This should include making use of the range of internal and external support available. Leaders should ensure that appropriate records are maintained which show that the decision to place a pupil in alternative provision, or to move the pupil to the roll of the alternative provision, is made only when this is in the best interests of the pupil. Governors should ensure that they regularly evaluate the school's use of alternative provision, including success in reintegrating pupils to the school. Governors and trustees should ensure that they have the information they need to challenge leaders about the reasons for pupils moving from the school's roll to alternative provision or into home education.
- Some pupils are isolated from lessons too often because of their behaviour. Leaders should regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the school's behaviour systems, including through a review of the number of pupils who are repeatedly internally or externally excluded. Those responsible for governance should routinely receive relevant information so that they can challenge leaders to reduce the proportion of pupils who are isolated from the classroom.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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're 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	137577
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10127871
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1365
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Terry Elliott
Principal	Chris Stokes
Website	www.farnley.leeds.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2013

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has had a number of changes of principal. The current principal joined the school in March 2018.
- The school was previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 on 11–12 December 2013.
- The school makes use of the trust’s own alternative provision, The Stephen Longfellow Academy. Additionally, some pupils attend Core and West11 alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under section 9 of the same Act.

- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the trust’s chief executive officer, senior leaders and curriculum leaders.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body, one of whom is a trustee.
- The subjects which were considered as part of the inspection through the deep

diverse methodology were English, mathematics, science and PE. Inspectors visited lessons, talked to the curriculum leader for each subject, held discussions with the teachers and pupils from the lessons visited, and scrutinised pupils' work.

- To inspect safeguarding in the school, inspectors scrutinised the school's single central register, relating to the safe recruitment of those adults who work with pupils, along with records relating to safeguarding. Inspectors also held discussions with staff and pupils, as well as with the designated safeguarding leader for the school.
- Inspectors visited one of the alternative provision sites which the school makes use of and had discussions with managers.

Inspection team

Barry Found, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steve Shaw	Her Majesty's Inspector
Carl Sugden	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Dixon	Ofsted Inspector

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