

# Inspection of Netherwood Academy

Dove Valley Way, Wombwell, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S73 8FE

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Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5  
of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Although leaders have high expectations for the pupils at this school, they know that pupils have not achieved as well as they should by the end of Year 11. This is because the curriculum has not been ambitious enough. Since being appointed last year, the principal and senior leaders have been successful in making a number of improvements. There are signs that the quality of education is improving.

Leaders are improving pupils' behaviour at school. Incidents of poor behaviour have declined, but occasionally some lessons are still disrupted. Pupils are more able to focus on their lessons. Staff have a mixed opinion about the behaviour of pupils.

Most pupils are happy to attend school. They say that the school is a safe place. When bullying does happen, pupils are confident to tell a member of staff. Pupils know that their concerns will be taken seriously.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular and personal development activities. Leaders ask pupils to tell them if there are other clubs they would like to have. As a result, there is now a girls' football club. Leadership opportunities for pupils have also been developed. These include prefects, anti-bullying ambassadors and pupil 'subject leaders'.

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

The appointment of a new principal and a new trust management board within the past 18 months has brought a real sense of purpose to the school. New leaders are aware that pupils, parents and carers, and staff have been let down in the past. Leaders' determined approach to improvement is starting to have an impact. They have brought in a new behaviour system. Lessons are calmer and there are fewer incidents of poor behaviour around school. Pupils appreciate the importance of good behaviour. However, not all staff consistently address poor behaviour, particularly around corridors and social areas. Furthermore, some staff are not confident that the new behaviour systems will be sustained.

Leaders are focused on improving the quality of education. Subject leaders have received training on how to design the curriculum in their subjects. They know what they want pupils to learn and the order in which they want pupils to learn it. Most plans clearly identify the important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember over time. However, some plans are not as developed. They do not highlight this knowledge well enough. As a result, teachers do not always deliver the subject content in a way that helps pupils to learn what leaders intend.

Pupils' attendance has improved. More pupils are in school more regularly. However, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) still do not attend school regularly enough. This affects the progress that they make through the curriculum because they miss parts of their learning.

Reading is a priority for leaders. Pupils have their reading ability checked when they join the school. Those who need extra help get the support that they need. Leaders know that they need to do more to help pupils with SEND. Although some parents of children with SEND are very positive about the support their child receives, others have concerns. Leaders have identified where they need to make improvements. Teachers need more guidance, training and support to develop their understanding of how to help all pupils with SEND to achieve well.

The curriculum for personal development has improved considerably. Younger pupils talk knowledgeably about fundamental British values. They know how to keep themselves safe online. Older pupils say that the new careers adviser helps them to decide their next steps. Pupils appreciate the support they have received.

Leaders know that pupils need to develop a real understanding of equality and diversity. However, plans for teaching pupils about different world views and religious views are not sufficiently developed. Consequently, pupils do not have a deep knowledge about other faiths and beliefs. This contributes to some pupils showing a lack of respect for others who may be different from them.

Leaders are focused on the well-being of staff. They seek out their views and make changes to systems and processes. Teachers say that the new marking policy has helped their workload. Early career teachers feel well supported. They are helped to manage behaviour.

A parents' forum helps parents to connect with leaders. Some parents feel that there is insufficient communication from the school. They would like more information about how their child is doing, and more detailed reasons for any behaviour sanctions.

The support the wider trust brings is unmistakable. Trustees know the school well and are aware of the challenges it faces. Trustees offer suitable levels of support and challenge to leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff know how to keep pupils safe. Safeguarding is seen as an important part of everyone's job. All staff receive training in safeguarding as part of their continuing professional development. Staff know how to spot the signs that a pupil is at risk. Staff follow the school's policies for reporting a safeguarding concern. They make sure that pupils receive the support they need, including from external agencies.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all staff consistently challenge pupils when their behaviour falls below the high standards that leaders expect. Pupils can engage in boisterous behaviour at social times. Staff do not always intervene. This means that some pupils do not behave as well around school as they do in lessons. Leaders must ensure that all staff follow the agreed approaches and sanctions in the behaviour policy.
- Teachers' support for pupils with SEND is variable. Some of the pupils' support plans do not have sufficient detail to enable teachers to adapt the curriculum for pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils with SEND underachieve. Leaders should ensure that teachers get the support, guidance and training to help them make successful curriculum adaptations for all pupils with SEND.
- Some curriculum plans are not ambitious enough. They do not outline the key knowledge that pupils should know and remember over time. As a result, pupils do not know and understand some important concepts. This is particularly the case with religious education. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans are ambitious in all subjects, particularly religious education.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND do not attend school as regularly as they should. This means that they miss out on important learning. Leaders should ensure that the attendance of all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, improves.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143907
<b>Local authority</b>	Barnsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200761
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,228
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Valerie Dunsford
<b>Principal</b>	Jonny Mitchell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://astreanetherwood.org">https://astreanetherwood.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Netherwood Academy is part of Astrea Academy Trust. It is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- A new principal took up post in September 2020.
- The school uses two alternative provision settings for pupils: Barnsley College and Core Training and Development Limited.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and geography. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at work they had completed.

- Inspectors reviewed curriculum plans and visited lessons in other subjects, such as art, computer science and history.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, and reviewed safeguarding documentation and referrals to the local authority. Inspectors spoke with a range of staff about how they keep pupils safe.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the trust management board, including the chair of the trust. They spoke with the chief executive of the trust.
- Inspectors talked to staff and pupils. They analysed the 76 responses to Ofsted’s Parent View survey, including 56 free-text responses. The lead inspector held telephone conversations with two parents. Inspectors also considered the 84 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey and 86 responses to the pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Eleanor Belfield, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
John McNally	Ofsted Inspector
Erica Hiorns	Ofsted Inspector
Jamie Lawler	Ofsted Inspector
David Pridding	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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