

# Inspection of River Tyne Academy Gateshead

Millway Centre, Sheriff Hill, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE9 5PQ

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Inspection dates: 29 and 30 June 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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

River Tyne Academy Gateshead offers pupils a fresh start. Most pupils arrive having been permanently excluded from their previous school. Many arrive at a time of personal crisis. The staff take time to welcome pupils and assess their academic, social and emotional needs. All pupils are provided with carefully tailored programmes to help them adjust to a new school environment, and some have an extended period of transition. This includes a range of therapies to help pupils feel secure enough to learn again. When pupils are ready, they join other pupils at the main school site.

Pupils and staff develop positive relationships. Staff work hard to gain pupils' trust and respect. As pupils are taught in small groups, they get lots of attention and help. There is always an adult on hand if a pupil feels overwhelmed. Over time, most pupils improve their behaviour and attendance. The strength of relationships between pupils means bullying rarely happens. If it does, it is quickly addressed.

Expectations are high. Pupils are expected to apply themselves and to study for GCSE qualifications. Pupils' personal development is given equal importance. The academy provides a rich curriculum that helps to re-engage pupils. Some pupils successfully return to mainstream education. A strong careers programme ensures school leavers find appropriate places in education, employment or training.

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

River Tyne Academy Gateshead is a good school. Senior leaders and those in governance set themselves challenging goals. They are absolutely determined to get pupils back on track after losing their way in mainstream education. Their ongoing investment in the academy has created an asset for the community.

The academy has an ambitious curriculum. The standards expected academically match the aims of the national curriculum at key stage 3. Pupils study a broad range of GCSE qualifications at key stage 4. Curriculum planning is well developed. The staff have selected topics carefully and made sure they are taught in a logical sequence. Planning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is thorough. Some teaching meets pupils' needs really well. New knowledge is broken down into small chunks and progress is checked regularly throughout the lesson. However, some teachers do not explain or present information clearly enough for pupils who find it difficult to concentrate and stay focused. In addition, some teachers do not address gaps in pupils' knowledge sufficiently well. Leaders have a programme of professional development in place. This is helping teachers to refine these skills.

Some pupils who are new to the school are still adapting to its approach and expectations. Therefore, there can still be some low-level disruption and occasional use of bad language. But this is increasingly the exception. Staff all follow the

behaviour policy. They give time and support to pupils who need to step out of lessons if they feel anxious or need to regain their composure. Adults manage this calmly and with minimum disruption. Over time, most pupils learn to regulate their emotions. When the academy opened in 2018, suspensions were used frequently. Since then, rates of suspension have reduced significantly, reflecting the marked progress that has been made. Most pupils improve their attendance and relatively few remain persistently absent.

The quality of support for pupils' personal development is exceptional. From the point of entering the school, no stone is left unturned. Each pupils' needs are assessed and provided for. Pupils' personal development programmes are reviewed every few weeks. Personal, social and health education lessons cover sex and relationships and ensure pupils gain a respectful awareness of different groups in society. Further individual support is provided for many pupils on a one-to-one basis. This ongoing coaching or mentoring contributes positively to pupils' improved behaviour and attitude. Careers education has been strengthened this year with the addition of work experience opportunities. Pupils spoke positively about how working in construction or a children's nursery had helped to motivate them.

Staff who worked in the school before it joined the trust praise the ambition shown by school leaders. They feel well supported and that leaders take their workload into account. They are proud that some pupils successfully return to mainstream education and that many now leave the school able to take positive steps forward in life.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Most pupils at the school are vulnerable. Consequently, the academy has well-developed safeguarding systems. The designated safeguarding leader works closely with the local authority, the police, youth justice teams and the voluntary sector to coordinate the support that pupils and families need. All members of staff are well trained. They have a good understanding of the types of abuse and neglect that are most likely to pose risks to pupils. Timely actions are taken to protect pupils at risk. The personal development curriculum ensures pupils are taught about risks they could face and how to keep themselves safe.

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

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

- Some pupils find it difficult to concentrate and stay focused in lessons for long periods. Because of this, it is particularly important that teachers have the necessary pedagogical skills to present subject matter clearly and concisely so that pupils are not cognitively overloaded. Leaders should ensure that their

professional development programme supports teachers' pedagogical development so that these skills become more consistent across subjects.

- Scrutiny of books showed that, occasionally, some teachers do not ensure that missed work is revisited or that assessment checklists are completed. This results in some pupils having gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should look to share the good assessment practice in the academy so that this area also becomes more consistent.
- Occasionally, some adults use colloquial language to try and foster good working relationships with pupils. Staff should avoid this, as it does not support pupils' development of spoken English.

## 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.

## 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>	144352
<b>Local authority</b>	Gateshead
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227635
<b>Type of school</b>	Alternative provision
<b>School category</b>	Academy alternative provision sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	73
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Pat Cabbage
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christina Jones
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://rtmat-middlesbrough.frogos.net/app/os#!academygateshead/home">https://rtmat-middlesbrough.frogos.net/app/os#!academygateshead/home</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- River Tyne Academy Gateshead is a sponsor-led alternative provision within the River Tees Multi-Academy Trust. The academy caters for pupils who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools. Most places are commissioned by Gateshead local authority, although some places are commissioned directly by schools. The academy also caters for pupils at risk of being excluded and offers an outreach programme for schools. The academy also offers some places for pupils with SEND and children in the care of Gateshead local authority.
- The academy operates from two sites. These are the Millway Centre, Sheriff Hill, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE9 5PQ and the main site at Birtley Lane, Birtley, Gateshead BH3 2PP.
- The previous headteacher left the school in the spring of 2022. The chief executive officer of the trust has acted as headteacher in the interim before the newly appointed headteacher takes up post in the summer term 2022.

- The school places some pupils with alternative education providers. The providers used are Sporting Chance, Wheels and the Young Women’s Project.

## **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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The inspectors also met with the chair of the Trust and two other trustees who are also members of the local governing committee.
- At the Birtley site, inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, English, science, and art and design. 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.
- An inspector visited the Millway Centre site and visited lessons to look at the teaching of reading and English.
- An inspector met the special educational needs coordinator and scrutinised a selection of support plans for pupils with SEND. Visits were made to lessons to see how these support plans were being used by teachers.
- Inspectors met different groups of pupils to discuss safety, personal development, well-being, behaviour and careers guidance.
- Inspectors met with leaders for safeguarding and reviewed records of the academy’s work to protect vulnerable pupils. An inspector looked at the record of vetting checks made on adults who work in the academy.
- An inspector made telephone calls to some of the alternative providers used by the academy.
- Inspectors considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys and responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

## **Inspection team**

Chris Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Jill Bowe

Ofsted Inspector

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