

Inspection of Derby Cathedral School

Great Northern Road, Derby, Derbyshire DE1 1LR

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders want the best for the pupils and the community they serve. They promote the school's FAITH values of 'fellowship, aspiration, integrity, tenacity and humility'. Pupils talk positively about their relationships with staff and discuss the subjects they enjoy studying.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Behaviour in lessons is calm. Pupils behave respectfully towards one another during social times. Leaders have split lunchtimes so that all pupils in the school do not have their free time together. This has created more time and space for pupils. Pupils feel safe. They say that on the occasions when bullying occurs, teachers deal with it effectively. Some pupils say that they hear derogatory language.

A range of clubs and activities is available for pupils during a 'seventh session' of the school day. Many pupils enjoy participating in clubs, including cooking club, netball and an LGBTQ+ group. Some pupils complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Subject leaders have organised trips connected to what pupils are studying, such as a history visit to Kedleston Hall.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum, which enables pupils to study a broad range of subjects. The number of pupils who have chosen to study GCSE subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate has increased. Subject leaders have designed curriculums that identify the important knowledge that pupils will learn. The order in which pupils learn new knowledge provides them with effective opportunities to revisit and build on prior learning.

Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. They consistently use 'start now' tasks at the beginning of lessons. These tasks help some pupils to correct errors or address gaps in their learning. However, teachers do not always check pupils' understanding effectively. Some pupils recall more knowledge and have more completed work in their books than others.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs accurately identified. Leaders have ensured that teachers receive the information they need to adapt their teaching to support pupils with SEND. On occasion, pupils with SEND do not receive the precise support they need to access all aspects of their lessons.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Pupils who need extra help to become confident readers benefit from a range of strategies. All pupils take part in 'drop everything and read' sessions, which provide pupils with the opportunity to develop their reading fluency.

Pupils behave well. The behaviour of pupils has improved over time. Some pupils do not take as much pride in their work as they could. A small number of pupils are not always punctual to their lessons. Leaders have introduced strategies to help pupils manage their punctuality. These strategies are beginning to have an impact.

Pupils develop their knowledge of healthy relationships, British values and protected characteristics well. They learn about careers and next steps from the beginning of their time at secondary school. In Year 7, pupils visit the University of Derby. Pupils hear from a range of employers, including Toyota. They take part in work experience in Year 10. These opportunities help prepare pupils well for the world of work.

Staff are able to access training when they need it. Leaders provide targeted training when it is appropriate. Teachers who are new to the profession value the support they receive. Those staff members who shared a view were very positive about the way in which leaders take account of their workload and well-being.

Leaders have identified a range of areas for improvement. These areas include the provision for pupils with SEND and the behaviour of pupils. In so doing, leaders have acted swiftly to improve pupils' experiences of school.

Governors and trustees share leaders' vision for the school. They know the school's priorities and hold leaders to account. The Trust supports leaders in developing their understanding of their roles and putting into place effective strategies. For example, they have implemented strategies in relation to the provision for disadvantaged pupils. Governors and trustees fulfil their statutory duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have put a programme of safeguarding training in place. Staff receive regular safeguarding updates. Leaders analyse trends that emerge from safeguarding referrals. They have ensured that staff know how to spot signs that indicate that pupils may need support. Staff have completed training about how to report concerns.

Pupils learn about how to stay safe, including when online. Leaders provide pupils with assemblies and lessons that respond to local and national safeguarding concerns. Pupils also study a safeguarding issue each week during tutor time. Therefore, they learn how to keep themselves safe were such an issue to affect them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding effectively. As a result, there are occasions when pupils are unable to complete activities successfully because they do not have the knowledge and understanding they need. Leaders should ensure that teachers understand how best to check that all pupils have the knowledge and understanding they need before moving learning on.
- Some pupils do not demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to their learning. A small number of pupils are not punctual to their lessons. This means that pupils are not benefitting as much as they could from the good-quality education that the school is providing. Leaders have begun to address these issues. They should ensure that pupils understand the importance of adopting positive attitudes to their learning, including by being punctual to lessons, so that they benefit fully from the education that the school provides.

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

Unique reference number	143734
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10254749
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	883
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Charles
Headteacher	Jenny Brown
Website	www.derbycathedralschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act, 2005

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2018. In its first year, the school catered solely for Year 7 pupils. Each year from that point, an additional year group cohort has been added to the school roll. The school now has pupils from Year 7 to Year 11. Sixth-form provision will be offered from September 2023.
- The school moved to its current building in September 2021.
- There have been significant staff changes as the number of pupils on roll has increased. Three members of the senior leadership team took up their posts in September 2022. The department that oversees the provision for pupils with SEND is entirely new.
- The school uses eight alternative providers, two of which are unregistered. The remainder are registered.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, geography, history, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and visited a sample of lessons in which pupils with SEND were present.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour, attendance, personal development, disadvantaged pupils and professional development.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils in key stages 3 and 4.
- Inspectors visited the provision for pupils who require support with their behaviour or social, emotional and mental health, including 'Navigation' and isolation, as well as support offered by the emotional literacy support assistant.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed relevant safeguarding documentation.
- The lead inspector met with governors and reviewed minutes from meetings held by those responsible for governance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Matthew Fearn-Davies, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rakesh Patel	His Majesty's Inspector
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