

Inspection of Freebrough Academy

Linden Road, Saltburn-By-the-Sea TS12 2SJ

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Freebrough Academy receive an exceptional education. This is a school where pupils' academic success and strength of character are of equal importance. Leaders set high expectations for everyone at the school. Staff and pupils share strong relationships.

Common values of kindness, tolerance and respect are important to everyone within the school community. Bullying is very rare. Pupils have confidence that staff would deal with any of their concerns quickly. Inappropriate language, racism or homophobia have no place at the school. Pupils receive important messages about different faiths and cultures so that they are well prepared for life beyond school.

Pupils exhibit very positive attitudes to their education. They engage enthusiastically in their lessons, responding well to searching questions posed by staff. Nevertheless, there are still some pupils who choose to make the wrong decision when it comes to managing their own behaviour. Leaders and staff have been successful in improving most pupils' attitudes towards their education. Pupils who require further support to improve their behaviour receive this quickly.

Leaders' commitment and success in developing pupils' character and personal values are first class. Pupils appreciate the importance of good manners, respect and putting others first. They take part in food hamper collections, fundraising and volunteering. Pupils' opinions are valued by leaders. Everyone has a voice and an opportunity to do their very best at this school.

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

Leaders and staff have transformed the school. Since joining the multi-academy trust (the trust), the quality of education pupils receive has improved significantly. Furthermore, pupils' personal development is a standout feature across the school. Safeguarding arrangements are much stronger too.

Leaders at all levels have an ambitious vision for school improvement. Their commitment to pupils' education and well-being is particularly strong. Trustees and governors have a wide range of skills and experience. They use these to support and challenge school leaders well.

The curriculum and subject content from which pupils learn is exceptional. Leaders have considered precisely what should be taught and when. There are planned opportunities for pupils to revisit important knowledge so that it is not forgotten. The curriculum is very ambitious. Pupils study a wide range of subjects including those in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), which includes English, mathematics, science, a language, and either history or geography.

Staff are passionate, skilled and knowledgeable. They ask targeted questions in lessons that develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers adapt their

lessons to meet the needs of all pupils well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The additional resourced provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) at the school provides high-quality specialist support. Pupils with ASD use the provision regularly for academic and pastoral sessions. Many pupils achieve exceptionally well, including those with SEND.

Assessment is used very effectively. Staff know where pupils have gaps in their knowledge and address these quickly. Feedback is often provided directly to pupils in lessons so that pupils can correct any misunderstandings immediately. In some subjects, pupils are beginning to make complex connections between their learning over time. For example, in English, where pupils use what they have learned about an author's technique to understand new, more complex pieces of writing.

Leaders ensure pupils have the opportunity to read a wide range of texts in lessons and for pleasure. A strong culture of reading exists across the school. Many pupils, including those with SEND, borrow books regularly from the school library. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning to read benefit from additional support. This helps them improve their reading rapidly.

Pupils receive a wide, rich set of experiences. Opportunities to learn beyond the classroom are vast. Pupils take part in educational visits, trips abroad, and they engage with local employers. Careers education is of a high quality. Pupils value the guidance they receive to help them make careful choices about their future. Pupils have access to a broad range of extra-curricular activities. These include sports, creative clubs and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Pupils participate in wider school life with enthusiasm. This commitment is rewarded through the 'iAspire' programme, achievement events and 'Extra Applause' awards from staff.

Leaders plan regular professional development that is of a high quality. Staff value the many training opportunities they receive. Professional development has a significant, positive impact on the quality of teaching, learning and leadership. Staff who work at the school are proud to do so. Leaders consider their well-being when making decisions. Staff are happy, fulfilled and share the vision of leaders to provide an exceptional education for all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are knowledgeable and experienced. Staff are well trained to identify when pupils may be at risk of harm. When staff raise concerns, they are dealt with effectively by leaders. Pupils understand how to stay safe and are happy at the school. Strong partnerships with a wide range of specialist agencies ensure that all pupils get the right support at the right time.

Leaders know the most vulnerable pupils well. Records of the actions they take to safeguard pupils are extremely thorough. Pupils learn how to stay safe in person and online. Parents and governors receive important information on safeguarding

matters. Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small minority of pupils are not aspiring to meet the behaviour expectations set at the school. This sometimes disrupts pupils' learning. Leaders should continue their efforts to improve the attitudes to learning and behaviour of a small minority of pupils so that disruptions to learning are reduced even further.

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	147541
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	10255569
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	814
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Sanders
Principal	Gemma Knox
Website	www.northerneducationtrust.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Northern Education Trust in September 2019. There have been significant changes in leadership and staffing since then.
- The school has a resourced provision for pupils with ASD.
- The school is registered to provide education for pupils up to 18 years of age. Currently, there are no post-16 pupils attending the school. Leaders are consulting on the closure of the sixth-form provision. As a result, this inspection did not provide a judgement for sixth-form education.
- The school makes use of five alternative providers. One of these is not registered with the Department for Education.
- Careers guidance in the school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which means pupils in Years 8 to 11 receive information about the full range of education and training options available to them. This includes opportunities for a range of providers to speak to pupils about technical education 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 received since the COVID pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the principal, executive principal, senior leaders and representatives of the trust. Inspectors spoke to teaching and non-teaching staff, in addition to representatives of the local governing body. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer.
- To evaluate the quality of education, deep dives were carried out in English, science, history and physical education. Inspectors spoke with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at books and spoke to both pupils and staff.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and a sample of pupils' work from mathematics, modern foreign languages, art and design, computing and performing arts.
- Inspectors examined the schools' behaviour records, spoke to pupils who had been suspended from school and spoke with providers of alternative education.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator. They looked at a range of documentation, including education, health and care plans and individual learning plans. Inspectors also checked how pupils with SEND are supported in lessons. One inspector also visited the resourced provision for pupils with ASD.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including checks made on all adults who come on to the school site. Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff to ensure their understanding of safeguarding procedures. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to check on their work to keep pupils safe in school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

John Linkins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Karen Gammack	Ofsted Inspector
Moira Banks	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Morris	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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