

Inspection of Haberdashers' Abraham Darby

Ironbridge Road, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire TF7 5HX

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils and students enjoy school and want to do well. Staff have positive relationships with pupils and take time to get to know them. Pupils know that they can seek help when they need it. As a result, most pupils say that they feel safe and supported. Pupils are very appreciative of the many and varied experiences and opportunities that help them develop as individuals. Sixth-form students provide a valuable contribution to the wider life of the school. For example, they act as reading buddies to support younger pupils to improve their reading.

Pupils generally behave well during lesson and social times. However, there is a small group of pupils who disrupt learning and are inconsiderate of others during breaks. Leaders are aware of these pupils and the impact they are having on others.

Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy learning and try hard to meet the high expectations that are now in place. These pupils are achieving well.

Many pupils and sixth-form students enjoy and participate in a range of extra-curricular clubs. These are designed to meet a wide variety of interests, from engineering to chess, as well as music and a range of sporting activities. Rugby, netball, athletics, music and dramatic performances are especially popular.

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

Leaders and teachers are dedicated to improving the outcomes for all pupils. In recent years, they have worked to improve the curriculum. This has led to a greater clarity about the knowledge that pupils need to gain. Consequently, an ambitious, carefully sequenced curriculum is now in place that enables most pupils to achieve well.

Teachers deliver the curriculum effectively. They present new subject matter clearly and focus carefully on the knowledge that pupils need to gain. Leaders have secured relevant training to help staff in their roles. As a result, teachers' pedagogy and subject knowledge is a strength, particularly in the sixth form. Leaders at all levels ensure that teachers use assessment precisely to help pupils know and remember more.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND have the best possible experience in the classroom. Subject leaders reflect this in their planning. Pupils receive effective support within lessons. Additional support beyond the classroom focuses on enabling pupils to access the curriculum. This enables pupils with SEND to make good progress.

Pupils who struggle to read receive the help they need to develop their reading skills. Leaders assess pupils carefully to identify the most effective support. As a result, these pupils are learning to read and catching up appropriately.

Pupils are clear that the poor behaviour of a few pupils can disrupt their learning. Staff echo this opinion. Leaders recognise the negative effect that this group is having on learning. They are making changes to the behaviour system. This is showing early signs of impact. However, suspensions remain high at present and attendance in lessons for this group of pupils is also an issue.

Low attendance in the sixth form is an issue. Some students miss too much of their study programmes. Persistent absenteeism is high across all year groups. This is leading to some pupils and students not achieving as well as they could.

Most pupils feel safe and when bullying or another incident does happen, they know that staff will deal with it. However, communication remains a significant issue. Inspectors saw evidence of leaders' actions, but this is often not seen or felt by pupils and parents.

The extensive personal development curriculum is built on the 'HAD' values. Leaders ensure that the value's message for the half term is consistent. Pupils experience this through their daily subjects, Insight lessons, mentor time and assemblies. Pupils talk positively about their Insight lessons. They learn age-appropriate content in terms of relationships and how to keep themselves safe. Pupils also have a good understanding of fundamental British values and protected characteristics. Disadvantaged pupils are supported to access opportunities they wish to be involved in.

Pupils are being prepared well for future study, employment, or training. They choose from a broad range of vocational and academic subjects at key stages 4 and 5. Pupils and students receive detailed careers information and a wide range of experiences. This includes information about apprenticeships and other routes into employment.

Trustees and governors have a clear vision that every pupil is supported as an individual. They hold an accurate picture of both education and behaviour. Governors understand their role and hold leaders to account in an appropriate manner. Trustees and the acting principal are working effectively together to secure additional support where it is needed.

Leaders are very considerate of the mental health of their staff, pupils and students. Leaders listen and adjust where possible to support staff well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding pupils and students is at the centre of leaders' work. Processes to identify pupils who need help are rigorous and part of daily practice. Leaders work effectively with a range of external agencies to ensure that the right help is secured at the right time for pupils and their families.

All staff and governors have received appropriate training. They know how to recognise signs of need and report all concerns in a timely way. Leaders are very clear that no concern is too small to report.

Pupils are taught how to recognise risks and to keep themselves safe, including when online. Leaders are aware of risks in the local community and make sure that pupils know how to protect themselves from those risks.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Behaviour of a small group of pupils is not good enough. This means that lessons are sometimes disrupted for the many pupils who wish to learn. Leaders need to ensure that routines and processes for behaviour are implemented effectively. Leaders also need to ensure that these pupils are helped to overcome any barriers to learning and engaging in school life.
- Rates of persistent absence are too high across all year groups. This means that some pupils struggle to make progress through the planned curriculum. Leaders should ensure that attendance improves, particularly for those who are persistently absent and students in the sixth form.
- Pupils and parents are not always kept informed about the actions leaders have taken when bullying or other incidents occur. This results in pupils and parents not understanding what leaders have done to address these issues. Leaders should ensure that they communicate appropriately and effectively with all stakeholders about the actions that they take.

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	135582
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	10268341
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,090
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	177
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	James Penney
Principal	Lee Hadley
Website	www.haberdashersabrahamdarby.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	15 September 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses four alternative providers. Two of these are unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the acting principal, members of the trust and governors, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, a parent and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, physical education, languages, geography and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum plan, spoke with the curriculum leader and visited mentor time and an assembly. An inspector also reviewed the support provided for pupils at an early stage of reading.
- Inspectors reviewed the provision for the sixth form. They also talked formally and informally to students and staff about their experience in sixth form.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' plans to improve the school and their self-evaluation of the school's work.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the pupil and staff surveys, as well as Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to behaviour, bullying and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe, the checks made to ensure safe recruitment and the quality of staff training.

Inspection team

Richard Wakefield, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mel Ford	His Majesty's Inspector
Rob Hackfath	His Majesty's Inspector
Ed Leighton	Ofsted Inspector

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