

# Inspection of Heanor Gate Spencer Academy

Kirkley Drive, Heanor, Derbyshire DE75 7RA

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Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

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

Pupils are proud to be part of this extremely ambitious school. Leaders have the highest expectations of pupils and want the absolute best for them. Pupils thrive at this school and are eager to attend. Attendance is high.

The curriculum reflects the school's ethos of 'Aspire, Learn, Achieve'. The curriculum is thoughtfully designed to match pupils' interests and needs. Pupils benefit from highly supportive relationships with their teachers. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe. There is always a trusted adult to go to. Pupils know staff 'go above and beyond' to provide an outstanding education. One parent captured the common view 'nothing is too much trouble for the staff, ever'.

Pupils are extremely well behaved. Classrooms are calm places, where pupils focus on their learning. Bullying is rare, and if it does happen, pupils are confident staff address it quickly. Pupils know the school's values. These permeate everything they do. Pupils show high levels of respect for each other's differences.

Pupils enjoy a range of enriching experiences and activities. These include a range of clubs, the Combined Cadet Force, visits to universities, scientific exhibitions and trips to other countries. Pupils spoke with excitement about the school's music and performing arts festival 'HeanorFest'. Leaders ensure that all pupils can fully participate in these activities, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND). This helps all pupils develop their talents and interests.

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

Leaders cultivate the aspirations of pupils through a rich and demanding curriculum. They have ensured that subject curriculums are extremely ambitious, carefully thought out and relevant for all year groups. In the sixth form, students benefit from a very high-quality education in a broad range of subjects. Lessons are highly demanding, and students rise to that challenge exceedingly well.

Teachers are subject experts. They recognise the important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember in each subject. Teachers skilfully break down learning into small steps and build it up. They provide pupils with frequent opportunities to revisit previously taught content. Pupils say this helps them remember more. Pupils build a rich and detailed knowledge over time. As a result, all pupils achieve well.

Teachers use assessment exceptionally well to check pupils' understanding. They adapt lessons to address any misconceptions. Teachers ensure pupils' knowledge is secure before moving on. Teachers are alert to any gaps in pupils' learning and they make sure these are filled. Across all subjects, this approach is consistent. Pupils' written and verbal responses are of an extremely high quality.

Leaders have established clear processes for identifying and supporting pupils who require additional support. Teachers and learning progress assistants receive precise information on how to support pupils to access the same curriculum as their peers, which they do with success.

Leaders place a strong focus on ensuring that all pupils can read fluently and confidently. Where pupils are at an early stage of learning to read, they benefit from specialist support from highly skilled staff. This is ensuring that pupils quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to catch up and access the wider curriculum.

Disruption to pupils' learning is rare because the curriculum and teaching are thoroughly engaging. The small number of pupils that struggle to manage their own behaviour receive the support that they need from the accomplished pastoral team. Pupils learn to be confident, resilient and independent learners.

Purposeful opportunities to develop pupils into becoming responsible and respectful citizens are plentiful. Leaders give pupils opportunities to learn about the importance of equality, diversity and tolerance. For example, they learn about the features of healthy relationships and protected characteristics, as well as other cultures and beliefs. Pupils' work in the community is commendable. This includes support with food banks, a 'sleep out' to raise money for the homeless and visits to a local care home for the elderly. Pupils are prepared well to take their place in modern society.

Pupils are ambitious about their future. A tailored programme of careers information, education, advice and guidance is highly bespoke to pupils' needs. In the sixth form, students are able to make informed decisions about their future. Increasing numbers are choosing to go to university. Pupils and students are thoroughly prepared for their next steps.

Leaders are relentless in their desire to provide the absolute best education for all pupils and to serve the local community. Staff appreciate the support the trust offers such as the high-quality training opportunities tailored to their career stage. They also feel that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. Staff are proud to work at this school and to be part of 'Team Heanor'.

Governors and trustees share the leaders' ambition. They are knowledgeable and skilfully hold the school leaders to account and fulfil their duties.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Through staff training and support, leaders have created a vigilant culture of safeguarding. Leaders have a good understanding of their local context, and they share this with staff. As a result, staff are alert to the potential risks facing pupils and know how to report any concerns. Record-keeping is thorough, and appropriate checks are conducted when recruiting new staff. The safeguarding team work closely with local partners and outside agencies to support families and pupils.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe in their citizenship lessons and school assemblies. These cover themes related to staying safe, including online safety, sexual harassment and sexual violence.

## **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>	137606
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268033
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,331
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	213
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Donna Kinderman
<b>Principal</b>	Matt Jones
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.heanorgatespencer.com">www.heanorgatespencer.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 and 5 May 2022 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- The principal took up post, from their previous role as head of school, in February 2023.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school has a large sixth form.
- 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.

## Information about this inspection

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

Act 2005.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, representatives of the multi-academy trust and members of the local governing board.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in mathematics, science, history, geography, computing and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work in other subjects. They visited the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. They visited tutor time and an assembly.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative of the alternative provision used by the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders and spoke with staff and pupils to evaluate the school's safeguarding arrangements. They scrutinised a range of records relating to safeguarding, including pre-employment checks for staff.
- Inspectors spoke to the staff with responsibility for SEND, behaviour, attendance, professional development, sixth-form provision and personal development. They also reviewed a range of documentation in these areas, including bullying logs.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at various times of the day, including the start and end of the day and lunchtime and breaktime.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, pupils and staff through their respective Ofsted surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with staff, including those early on in their careers, during the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Sue Vasey, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Rhatigan	Ofsted Inspector
Keval Thakrar	Ofsted Inspector
Louisa Morris	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Carlile	Ofsted Inspector

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