

# Inspection of a good school: Tarleton Academy

Hesketh Lane, Tarleton, Preston, Lancashire PR4 6AQ

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Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2023

## Outcome

Tarleton Academy continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to attend Tarleton Academy. They told inspectors that they are proud of their new building and facilities. Pupils said that this has helped to increase their enjoyment of learning, especially in practical activities.

Staff know pupils well. This helps pupils to feel safe in school. Pupils know who to speak to if they are worried or upset. Leaders deal with occurrences of bullying effectively.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Most pupils behave well during their lessons and around school. If pupils fall short in their behaviour, staff follow a consistent approach to address incidents effectively.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils at Tarleton Academy, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most pupils achieve well. Pupils feel fully informed about their next steps. They are well prepared as they progress into further education, employment or training.

Pupils benefit from a broad range of opportunities to enhance their wider personal development. For example, older pupils enjoy supporting younger pupils as they learn to become responsible citizens. Pupils learn how to keep safe and healthy. They also take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities, including forensics club, eco club and the choir.

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

Pupils, including those with SEND, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. In many subjects, leaders have designed a strong curriculum that provides pupils with a secure foundation in readiness for key stage 4. A growing number of pupils are choosing to study the English Baccaalaureate suite of subjects.

In most subjects, leaders have carefully organised the curriculum to support pupils to build their knowledge over time. However, a small number of subject curriculums are at an earlier stage of development. In these subjects, leaders are in the process of defining the essential knowledge that pupils should learn. From time to time, this hinders teachers in designing learning that builds on what pupils know already.

For the most part, teachers have secure subject knowledge and they explain concepts clearly to pupils. Staff receive regular subject-specific training. In the majority of subjects, this enables staff to deliver the curriculum consistently well. Subject leaders regularly monitor the delivery of the curriculum. They use this information successfully to adapt the curriculum to remedy any gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Teachers regularly check on what pupils know and remember. They identify and address pupils' misconceptions quickly. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. As a result, most pupils learn well and without disruption.

Leaders have prioritised reading across the school. For example, leaders have recently introduced an initiative, so that all pupils read regularly with their teachers. Books are carefully selected to broaden the range of topics that pupils read about and to extend their vocabulary. Leaders quickly identify pupils who need extra help with reading. Skilled staff provide these pupils with effective support, so that they can catch up quickly with their peers.

Rigorous systems are in place to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers are suitably equipped to support pupils with SEND to learn well. Teachers are skilful at making subtle adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils.

Leaders are passionate about the varied programme of personal development that they provide. Pupils benefit from high-quality careers education that raises their aspirations from a young age. Leaders work well with external providers to provide up-to-date and memorable experiences, such as visiting speakers and performances, to support pupils' learning.

Trustees, and members of the local academy council, are knowledgeable about leaders' priorities for continued improvement. They provide appropriate support and challenge for leaders. However, some aspects of leaders' communication with parents and carers are in development. Some parents, including parents of pupils with SEND, do not feel as well informed as they could about how well their children are progressing through the curriculum.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They said that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have comprehensive systems in place to support staff in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns. Staff receive regular safeguarding training, and they are vigilant in reporting any concerns that they have about a pupil's welfare. Leaders are fast to respond to these reports. They are proactive in securing the help and support that vulnerable pupils and their families may need.

Leaders ensure they have an up-to-date understanding of risks that their pupils may face. Leaders react quickly to the identification of any new risks and ensure that pupils receive appropriate information about how to keep themselves safe.

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

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

- In a small number of subjects, leaders are in the process of defining the knowledge that they want pupils to learn. On occasion, this hampers how well teachers design learning that builds on pupils' prior knowledge. As they finalise the curriculums in these subjects, leaders should ensure that teachers are clear about the essential knowledge that pupils must learn and when this should be taught.
- Some aspects of leaders' communication with parents are in development. This means that some parents do not feel as well informed as they should about how well their children are progressing through the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that parents, including parents of pupils with SEND, are informed well about the quality of education that pupils receive.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2015.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 137768   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Lancashire   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10256117   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Secondary comprehensive  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy converter  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11 to 16   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 695  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Helen Dicker   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Simon Day  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.tarletonacademy.org">www.tarletonacademy.org</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 17 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005           |

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Endeavour Learning Trust
- 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.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at one registered alternative provider.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. Inspectors also met with members of the local academy council and trustees, including the chair of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Endeavour Learning Trust.

- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils and students from Years 7 to 10 about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation document, improvement plans, minutes of the local academy council and trustee meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, and the school's single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, and art and design. 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 considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Eleanor Overland, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Derek Yarwood

Ofsted Inspector

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