

# Inspection of The Steiner Academy Hereford

Much Dewchurch, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 8DL

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Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

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

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

Leaders at The Steiner Academy Hereford celebrate every child as a unique individual. This is a school where pupils flourish. Parents say: 'This school is beyond brilliant'. Leaders and pupils share the same high aspirations. Relationships between pupils and staff are respectful, warm and courteous. The kindergarten enables children to make a great start to their education.

There is a purposeful atmosphere around the school. Pupils say they can focus well on their learning. Pupils work hard and want to learn. If a pupil loses concentration, teachers calmly speak to them to help them regain their focus. Pupils' very positive attitudes, along with the well-thought-out curriculum, enable them to achieve very well by the time they leave school.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development exceptionally well. The extra-curricular programme is rich and diverse. Many pupils attend activities, such as dance, coding, and circus skills. Opportunities such as residential trips to the Gower in Year 9 enhance the curriculum.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious and well-ordered curriculum based on the Steiner principles. All pupils follow the same curriculum, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This has led to some strong pupil outcomes by the end of key stage 4. Pupils also study non-examination subjects, such as handwork and eurythmy, with great skill.

Children in the kindergarten are exceptionally well prepared for when they move into 'lower school' at the start of Year 2. Skilled teachers involve children in challenging and independent learning. This includes children growing and cooking their own foods. They can also weave to create skipping ropes and other resources. Children thrive in the kindergarten.

Leaders identify the important things pupils need to know and learn to succeed. In most subjects, teachers present key knowledge precisely. This helps pupils to learn and remember the key knowledge. For example, Year 10 pupils are able use their prior mathematical learning to work out compound interest. These same pupils made links with their learning around household spending. However, in some learning at the start of lower school, some pupils do not make links to their previous learning in the kindergarten. This can lead to misunderstandings and gaps in some pupils' knowledge.

Teachers take many opportunities to develop and challenge pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 5 botany lesson, pupils developed a deeper understanding of plant pollination through questioning and discussion. This helps pupils to further extend their understanding of different topics.

Leaders quickly identify pupils with SEND. They provide staff with precise information about pupils' individual needs. Most teachers use this information effectively to adapt their teaching. Leaders' actions help pupils with SEND to increasingly achieve in line with other pupils.

Leaders continue to develop a range of ways to support pupils who are not confident readers. From lower school, teachers encourage pupils to read often, including during the 'main lesson' session. Teachers model reading by highlighting keywords well. Teachers also discuss pupils' understanding of these words. This helps pupils to develop into confident and fluent readers.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. Across the school, pupils actively support each other. All pupils spoken to agreed that it is very rare for poor behaviour to affect their learning. Pupils' well-being and mental health are at the forefront of leaders' vision. Leaders support pupils who need extra help extremely well. They have developed a well-planned programme of personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils learn about topics such as healthy relationships and democracy. All pupils receive unbiased information about potential next steps after school, as well as high-quality careers guidance. This prepares pupils exceptionally well for the next stages of their lives.

Senior leaders and governors know their school in the finest detail. They act with determination to improve any aspects that do not meet their very high expectations. Leaders have implemented a well-thought-out professional development programme for staff. Staff feel very well supported and consulted about policy changes. Governors are well informed about the curriculum. They both support and hold leaders to account for the decisions taken.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is exceptionally well embedded in the culture of the school.

Staff receive extensive, updated training throughout the year. All staff are proactive in reporting any concerns. Leaders know the pupils and their local context exceptionally well. They use this knowledge to quickly plan support and help for those pupils and their families that need it. Leaders contact external agencies when they need additional support to keep pupils safe.

Leaders are visible in person, and their photographs are on display around the school. Pupils say they know who to talk to and how they can report any concerns they have. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online.

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

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

- Teachers do not support pupils in the earliest stages of the lower school to make links to their previous learning well enough. This leads to gaps in what some pupils know and remember. Leaders should ensure that the links between the kindergarten curriculum and the curriculum in the earliest stages of lower school are strengthened to reduce the variations in how pupils learn and remember their key knowledge and skills.

## 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>	135672
<b>Local authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10285047
<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	339
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Harry Rouse
<b>Principal</b>	Kate Andrews
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.steineracademyhereford.org.uk">www.steineracademyhereford.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 April 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a single academy trust.
- The school is one of twenty-five Steiner schools in the UK, and nine early childhood centres or kindergartens. The school has exemptions from and modifications to aspects of the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors focused on the following deep dives: early reading, mathematics, music and science. 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 also looked at other subjects to check the curriculum and how these subjects are taught.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also looked at how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, the principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, pastoral leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to students, pupils and staff to gather information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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