

Inspection of Fulford School

Fulfordgate, Heslington Lane, Fulford, York, North Yorkshire YO10 4FY

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Steve Lewis. This school is part of South York Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Steve Lewis, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ian Dolben. There is also a governing body, chaired by Lesley Dolben.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Fulford School under Section 5 of the Education Act. However, Ofsted previously judged Fulford School to be outstanding, before it opened as Fulford School as a result of conversion to academy status.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who attend Fulford School are aiming for academic excellence. The school provides support, care and guidance to ensure that success is possible for all pupils. Pupils thrive here. The school is driven by strong moral values. These values determine all aspects of pupils' experience. The 'heart' values of honesty, empathy, ambition, resilience and tolerance are ones that pupils live out every day. Pupils develop in confidence and are encouraged to find their voice.

High expectations underpin all aspects at Fulford School, from academic success to attendance, character to conduct. The school has designed strong pastoral systems that prioritise inclusion and support for pupils. Staff know pupils well. Pupils are valued as individuals. Many parents and carers appreciate the support that the school provides for pupils who have faced challenges. The school celebrates success in all its forms, and both pupils and parents value the rewards system.

Leaders have created an inclusive community in which difference is valued and discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils recognise this as a distinctive aspect of their school experience. Pupils are routinely taught about respect and tolerance. They are confident to challenge any injustice or discrimination.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that is aspirational for all pupils and engages them with learning beyond examinations. Leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum knowledge that will allow pupils to contribute effectively to society. Through all subjects, pupils learn about the impact of current affairs, diversity and equality. Pupils at Fulford School are moulded to be citizens of the future.

The school recognises the importance of creating a culture of reading. A range of initiatives in place across the school ensure that pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. Subject leaders carefully weave reading opportunities throughout their curriculum. Sixth-form students talk with enthusiasm about 'recommended reads'.

The school has extremely high aspirations for the academic success of all pupils. It ensures that pupils are supported to reach these goals. Many pupils study separate sciences at key stage 4. Leaders have prioritised languages across the school. Staff support students entering key stage 5 well to help them choose from a wide range of academic and vocational qualifications.

In classrooms, the curriculum is delivered consistently well. Teachers ensure that pupils can remember what they have learned. They help pupils to make connections between what they already know and new learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is extremely strong, and new content is delivered with enthusiasm and expertise. The school has ensured that teachers have a strong understanding of how pupils learn. Teachers use this expertise to design lessons effectively. They routinely check for

gaps in pupils' knowledge and close these quickly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are expertly supported to access this ambitious curriculum alongside their peers. Pupils across school, including those with SEND, achieve exceptionally well.

In lessons, pupils mirror the enthusiasm and commitment modelled by teaching staff. Pupils are motivated and respectful. They engage willingly in their own learning. Pupils enjoy academic debate, exploring and challenging each other's opinions intelligently. The school has consistently high expectations for pupils' attendance, conduct and behaviour. Leaders ensure that pupils are taught how to meet these expectations. If pupils find this a challenge, leaders put in place highly effective, personalised support to ensure no child is left behind.

The school has placed a strong focus on pupil well-being. Pupils appreciate the support available from a wide range of pastoral staff. They trust that staff will tackle any reports of bullying quickly and effectively. Pupils treat each other with maturity and consideration.

Leaders support pupils to succeed beyond their academic studies. Pupils have access to a wide range of opportunities outside the classroom designed to broaden their horizons. Pupils throughout the school make good use of these opportunities. Key stage 5 students value the enrichment programme and the chances to volunteer in the community. An impressive student leadership programme encourages pupils to excel.

Leaders have ensured that staff feel proud to work at Fulford School. There is a strong focus on professional development and ensuring that staff, as well as pupils, achieve their potential. Staff believe that their opinions are considered and that leaders listen. Governors are strongly committed to the school's continued success and share the vision for excellence of school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	144711
Local authority	York
Inspection number	10290330
Type of school	Secondary
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	1,718
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	334
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Dolben
Headteacher	Steve Lewis
Website	www.fulford.york.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Fulford School converted to become an academy in January 2018. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school has an enhanced resource provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The school uses alternative provision for a very small number of pupils. Two of these providers are unregistered.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgment about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with a range of senior leaders from the school, including those with responsibility for SEND, careers, reading, behaviour, pupil premium funding and personal development. An inspector also met with representatives from the governing body and representatives from the trust, including the chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: modern foreign languages, mathematics, history, geography, science and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during lessons and at social times.
- An inspector contacted two alternative providers by telephone.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of local governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation and development plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online staff and pupil questionnaires. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Katie Spurr, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Dan McKeating	His Majesty's Inspector
Lynnette Cassidy	Ofsted Inspector
John Downs	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Hubbard	Ofsted Inspector

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