

Inspection of The De Montfort School

Four Pools Road, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 1DQ

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Ruth Allen. This school is part of Four Stones 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 (CEO), Mark Pollard, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sue Muggeridge.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. The atmosphere is calm and orderly, both inside and outside of lessons. Pupils enjoy positive and respectful relationships with the staff. The school does much to build pupils' character. The importance of 'The TDMS Way' is clear. Staff, students and pupils know what it means to be part of the school. This is built on the lived values of integrity, commitment, ambition and creativity.

Leaders are clear and consistent in their drive to make the school better. They have high expectations of all pupils. Students and pupils learn and grow in their understanding of the wider world, which prepares them for adult life. Pupils rise to leaders' expectations and achieve well in a range of subjects. Changes in the curriculum mean that more pupils now have a more academic focus to their studies.

Pupils from Year 6 upwards show positive attitudes to learning. They apply themselves well in lessons. They work calmly and studiously. This is clear through their written work and the pride they have in their achievements. Most pupils behave well, and this has improved in recent years. Pupils know they are cared for. They feel safe and happy in school. Pupils say that bullying is rare and not accepted in school at all. They know it would be swiftly dealt with if it was to occur.

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

Leaders at all levels ensure that curriculum planning is ambitious for all pupils. The school benefits from the work of the trust. It works collaboratively with the other two schools in the trust. Leaders have considered the starting points of the pupils. They work to understand what pupils have studied before they join the school. This is due to the number of admission points at the school.

The curriculum has clear end points for pupils to reach. Teachers have a sharp focus on what the pupils need to learn. They have strong subject knowledge and are supported to develop this further when needed. Pupils experience a clear sequence of learning in all subjects. Teachers adapt the curriculum well for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND experience the same ambitious curriculum and achieve well.

The school has placed reading at the centre of their work to help pupils develop. All pupils are encouraged to read often and widely. The school is working to address the needs of pupils who need extra help with reading. Pupils who need additional support with phonics and comprehension receive effective support to improve their reading skills. As a result, pupils develop their reading well and understand that reading helps them in their wider studies.

In most subjects, assessment is used well. Teachers use this to help pupils develop their understanding of key ideas and vocabulary and identify any gaps in their learning. This helps pupils to understand what they have learned and how it fits with what they already know and enables teachers to identify and address any gaps in

their understanding. However, in some subjects this is not as well developed. As a result, some pupils are not able to talk with fluency about their learning.

The current entry level for the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is low. The school has changed the options process in Year 9 to increase entries. This means that the current Year 10 pupils are now studying a curriculum with EBacc at its heart.

Pupils are specifically taught 'The TDMS Way'. They talk about this positively and understand the high expectations of the school. Pupils benefit from a holistic approach to their personal development. There is a sharp focus on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's approach includes the use of ethics lessons, pastoral support and careers education. This is further enhanced by the character academy, encouraging pupils to take advantage of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities. These include a range of musical activities and trips to outdoor adventure centres and abroad.

Sixth-form students also have opportunities beyond their academic studies. The enrichment programme offers a diverse range of options. These include film club, coaching younger pupils and developing their own cooking skills. Students have a comprehensive programme of additional talks and information. This is carefully designed to support their development. They have sessions on mental health and relationships with their personal tutors and careers talks from employers. Students are very positive about their experience in the sixth form. This includes how they are personally helped to make the transition to post-16 study.

Careers education is well planned and sequenced carefully. The school understands the needs of its pupils and is looking to develop this further. Leaders have a strong understanding of destinations data and make good use of this. Pupils and students are prepared well for their next steps.

Pupils work well with teachers and respond to the encouragement to 'show their best'. They know the importance of being on time to lessons. However, attendance is low for some groups of pupils. This means that they are not benefiting from what is on offer in the school. The school is aware of this and knows which pupils need support. They are working with these pupils and their families to overcome any barriers. This work is beginning to take effect.

Trustees support the development of governance and leadership within the school. Governors and trustees have an understanding of, and carry out, all their responsibilities. They have an accurate view of the school. They all know the school's strengths and areas to develop. The school is considerate of staff workload and have taken steps to improve this. Staff feel supported in the work they do.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, assessment is not used effectively to identify gaps in pupils' learning. This means that any gaps are not addressed well enough, and some pupils are not able to recall and use their new knowledge fluently. The school should ensure that teachers make use of all assessment opportunities to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge, so that pupils are able to recall and remember more.
- Rates of absence are too high for some groups of pupils. This means that some pupils struggle to make progress through the planned curriculum because they miss too much learning. Leaders at all levels should continue to work to ensure that attendance improves, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

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	148338
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10290681
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	10 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	883
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	110
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sue Muggerridge
CEO of the trust	Mark Pollard
Headteacher	Ruth Allen
Website	www.tdms.worcs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The De Montfort School converted to become an academy in January 2021.
- The school is part of the of Four Stones Multi Academy Trust.
- The school uses six alternative providers. Three are registered alternative providers and three are unregistered providers.
- 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 held meetings with the headteacher, trustees, CEO and governors, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers 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, computer science, music and history. 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and visited lessons in a variety of subjects, including sixth-form lessons.
- Inspectors discussed the provision for the sixth form with leaders, staff and students.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 reviewed the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum plan, spoke with leaders and visited assembly and form times. An inspector also reviewed the support provided for pupils in regard to reading.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to attendance, behaviour, bullying and punctuality.
- 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.

Inspection team

Richard Wakefield, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Peter Kent	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Considine	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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