

Inspection of Serlby Park Academy

Whitehouse Road, Bircotes, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN11 8EF

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**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

Jonathon Hodgson is the associate principal (secondary) of this school. Louise Ridge is the head of school (primary). This school is part of the Delta Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul Tarn, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Steven Hodsman.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school sits at the heart of the community it serves. There is a keen focus on helping pupils and their families overcome any challenges they might face. The school's ambitious 'changing lives' vision underpins leaders' determination to give pupils a good deal. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and appreciate the care and support they receive from staff. However, some pupils do not attend school as often as they should.

Pupils' positive attitudes mean that they are focused and keen to learn. They know that staff want them to be successful. Low-level disruption in lessons is not usual. Most pupils behave well around school and feel safe. This is reflected by the 'happy hum' of a busy lunchtime. According to most pupils, the school deals with any incidents of poor behaviour or bullying fairly and consistently.

Pupils like being with their friends. Younger pupils in the primary provision look up to their secondary peers. For example, pupils in Year 3 enjoy sharing their reading books with the Year 8 reading champions. Many pupils take part in after-school activities, including drama, sewing and sports clubs. They also benefit from trips to local museums, taking part in outdoor pursuits or visiting Paris.

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

The school has recently gone through a period of instability and uncertainty. Strong support from the trust has smoothed the transition to new leadership. During this time, the school has continued to improve. Staff, some of whom have only been in post for a short while, are proud to work at the school and are motivated to do a good job.

Children in the early years get off to a great start. They quickly learn to concentrate and grow in confidence. There are rich opportunities for children to learn about words and numbers. They engage eagerly with activities such as painting, making pumpkin soup and playing outdoors.

There is a strong focus on making sure that pupils can read well. Children in the Nursery Year 'warm up their fingers' to trace the shapes of letters they know. Pupils in the early stages of learning to read follow a well-planned programme to learn their letters and sounds. Those who struggle often read with an adult so that they can practise deciphering unfamiliar words. This support continues until pupils can read accurately and fluently.

Older pupils also have opportunities to enjoy reading. Pupils in key stage 2 love hearing their daily story. In the secondary phase, some pupils enjoy reading books they have chosen during breakfast sessions. Pupils know that reading is crucial to their success in other subjects.

The school has recently reviewed the curriculum. The curriculum offer in key stage 4 has been broadened to include more vocational and practical subject choices. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum suits the school's context. The curriculum is well organised so that teachers know what has gone before and what pupils will learn next.

Teachers use their detailed subject knowledge to deliver the curriculum. The resources and activities they choose help pupils learn new information and make links to what they know already. Teachers use skilled questioning and check pupils' written work to correct any misunderstandings. However, some of the work to improve the curriculum has not been in place long enough to ensure that pupils' knowledge is secure in all subjects.

Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their peers. The school provides these pupils with opportunities to repeat work to help them remember important information. Some parents and carers of children with SEND are positive about the help their children receive. Others are concerned that their children are not supported well enough.

The behaviour of most pupils is good. Pupils value the rewards they receive for having a positive attitude and trying their best. The number of pupils suspended from school is beginning to reduce. A few pupils benefit from extra support to help them improve their conduct.

The personal development programme teaches pupils how to look after their physical and mental health. Pupils understand what makes a friendship or a relationship healthy. They show respect when discussing those who have backgrounds that are different from their own. The provision for careers education is well developed, although leaders know that pupils should have more opportunities to gain work experience.

School and trust leaders have worked hard to secure the school's improvement. However, variations between some of the policies and practices in the primary and secondary phases risk reducing the impact of their work. Trustees know the school and its community well. They are committed to providing leaders with the right support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is well thought out and implemented consistently. However, some of the school's work to improve the curriculum is relatively recent. There has not been enough time for all of the developments to have the desired impact on what

pupils know and can remember. The school must ensure that the curriculum continues to be implemented effectively so that there is a sustained improvement in pupils' achievements.

- Some parents of children with SEND lack confidence in the help provided by the school to meet their children's needs. These parents are not always aware of how the school is supporting their child to do well. The school must improve its communication with parents of children with SEND so that these parents are well informed about, and involved with, the school's work to help their children be successful.
- Some pupils do not attend school often enough. These pupils miss out on important learning and wider school experiences. The school needs to continue its work to reduce persistent absence, particularly of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, so that all pupils attend school well.
- Leaders in the primary and secondary phases do not always work together closely enough. Full advantage is not taken to discuss common approaches and share effective practices. This sometimes creates an unhelpful disconnect between the two phases. The school should establish a commonly understood set of policies and practices so that the transition between key stages 2 and 3 is seamless.

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	137141
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10267987
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	935
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Steven Hodsman
CEO of Trust	Paul Tarn
Principal	Johnathon Hodgson (Associate Principal, secondary) Louise Ridge (Head of School, primary)
Website	www.serlbyparkacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2018

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Delta Academies Trust.
- The associate principal took up the position in July 2023. The headteacher of the primary phase has been in post since May 2023.
- There have been a significant number of leadership changes recently, including a new designated safeguarding leader and a new leader with responsibility for the provision for pupils with SEND in each of the primary and secondary phases.
- The school uses the services of two registered and three unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school runs a breakfast club, overseen by the trust.
- The school closed its post-16 provision in 2019.
- 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 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 met with the school's associate principal, the headteacher of the primary phase, two executive principals, and other school and trust leaders.
- The lead inspector met with two members of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in five subjects: reading, mathematics, history, science and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, and considered pupils' work. Inspectors spoke with teachers and pupils and heard some pupils read. On the second day of the inspection, inspectors examined the curriculum in a wider range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from a range of different year groups, including pupils with SEND. They spoke with pupils informally and observed the behaviour of pupils during social times.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of three of the alternative provisions used by the school on the telephone.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks, holding discussions with safeguarding leaders, staff and pupils, and reviewing documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took note of the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. They considered information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and suspensions, and the wider curriculum.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

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