

# Inspection of The de Ferrers Academy

St Mary's Drive, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE13 0LL

---

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 October 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

---

The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The principal of this school is Alison Bickle. This school is part of The de Ferrers Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Kathryn Hardy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Fiona Stagg.

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

The de Ferrers Academy is a vibrant and lively place to learn. Staff share a common purpose and goal and all want the best for pupils in their care. This purpose is based on the school's recent renewed drive to reset and raise expectations. All staff have bought into this new vision. This starts with a relentless focus on getting the 'little things' right at the beginning of each school day.

The school has put improving pupils' behaviour at the heart of its actions. Most pupils concentrate in lessons and try to do their best. They want to learn and do well. This means staff can focus on teaching rather than having to manage pupils' behaviour. At breaktime and lunchtime pupils chat and eat together and share their news with their friends.

The school has clear systems in place to address poor behaviour when it does occur. As routines and expectations have become established, the number of pupils receiving sanctions has fallen. A small number of pupils still struggle to behave well and treat others with care and respect. The school has a variety of measures in place to help these pupils improve. However, these are not always fully effective.

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

Leaders, governors and directors lead with vigour and determination. Staff are proud members of the school community. They work hard, feel valued and willingly engage with new ideas to make the school a better place for pupils.

The school has worked hard to improve the curriculum. In most subjects, the detail of what pupils will learn and when they will learn it is set out clearly. This includes signposting pupils to the prior knowledge they need to remember and the most important new knowledge that they need to learn. This means that there is a clear thread that runs through each subject in each key stage.

The school has given teachers time to discuss how they teach the curriculum. They use this time effectively to develop resources and share ideas. For instance, in mathematics, teachers explore the best ways of explaining complex concepts to pupils. Teachers working together in this way has had a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Teachers make regular checks on pupils' learning in a variety of ways. This includes using 'checkpoints' that focus on the important knowledge that pupils need to understand and remember. This helps teachers identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Most staff do this effectively. However, some 'in the moment' assessment is inconsistent. In some cases, teachers fail to explain new knowledge with sufficient clarity, or they move on without first checking pupils' understanding carefully.

The sixth form is a strength of the school. Despite learning on a different site, students are full and active members of the school and local community. They work alongside their teachers with dedication and verve. Staff get to know each student so that they can support them with their learning and ready them for their next steps.

The school is ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND are included in all aspects of school life. Their individual needs are identified and shared with teachers through 'pupil passports'. The school makes regular checks to ensure that this information is being used by teachers well. The school has a plan in place to further improve provision for pupils with SEND and is enacting this fully.

The school has prioritised reading. Staff read to pupils regularly and pupils enjoy this. The school has also put a structured programme in place to encourage all pupils to read. Pupils' engagement with this programme is monitored by staff. Pupils who need support to become confident and fluent readers benefit from regular additional help.

The school has put the tutor programme at its heart. Pupils spend time each day with their tutor, who gets to know them well. The school encourages tutors to contact parents to provide support, celebrate pupils' success and address any emerging issues. Pupils learn about a wide range of social, emotional and cultural issues in tutor time. This includes a well-planned and purposeful careers programme. Tutor-time learning is supported by 'values' lessons and assemblies. In these, pupils learn about complex issues such as consent, democracy and equality. The personal development programme is enhanced by a range of clubs, leadership opportunities and visitors that speak to pupils about a range of topics.

Some parents and pupils, in response to Ofsted's survey, questioned the changes to the behaviour system and the school's effectiveness in addressing bullying. This does not match with what inspectors found. Nevertheless, there is further work to do to ensure everyone understands the school's vision and the efficacy of its actions.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The school has not ensured that all teachers check pupils' understanding thoroughly. This means in some instances pupils are not learning the curriculum well and are not securing the foundational knowledge they need for their next steps. The school should ensure that teachers make accurate and regular checks on pupils' understanding so that pupils learn equally well in all subjects.

- A small number of pupils struggle to manage their behaviour and treat others with courtesy and respect. While the school does take action, it does not help these pupils improve their behaviour or attitude to others. The school should ensure that pupils who need help to improve their behaviour get the support they need to be full and active members of the school community.
- The school has not ensured that all parents and pupils share in leaders vision and understand the actions that leaders are taking to improve the school. As a result, a small number of parents and pupils remain concerned about the way that the school is tackling key issues, such as behaviour and bullying. The school should continue to find ways to engage with all parents and pupils to share its vision, build parental confidence and provide reassurance to 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136414
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268080
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	2,487
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	459
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Fiona Stagg
<b>Principal</b>	Alison Bickle
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.deferrers.com">www.deferrers.com</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	4 and 5 May 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is one of seven schools that make up The de Ferrers Trust.
- The school is situated on three separate sites.
- The school uses part-time alternative provision for a small number of pupils at two registered providers, as well as one other provider.
- 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography, art and modern foreign languages. 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.
- Inspectors held discussions with the principal and other senior and middle leaders, including the SEND coordinator.
- Inspectors spoke with members of the local governing body, the chair of trustees, the chief executive officer and the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's extra-curricular activities, enrichment programme and personal development programme with leaders.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection. They took account of responses to a pupil survey, a staff survey and Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding.
- 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.

## Inspection team

Ian Tustian, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Eddie Wilkes	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Considine	Ofsted Inspector
David Hermitt	Ofsted Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Ed Leighton	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023