

# Inspection of a good school: Malcolm Arnold Academy

Trinity Avenue, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN2 6JW

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Inspection dates:

7 and 8 November 2023

## **Outcome**

Malcolm Arnold Academy continues to be a good school.

The executive principal of this school is Megan Morris. This school is part of The David Ross Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Stuart Burns, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Ross.

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

The school has high expectations of all pupils. Pupils are considerate, polite and courteous. They understand and follow the ambition of 'The Malcolm Arnold Way'. Pupils know that teachers want the very best for them. This helps pupils to achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

There is a purposeful atmosphere around the school. In class, and around the school, pupils work diligently and behave very well. On the rare occasions when there is low-level disruption, teachers act quickly and efficiently to address it. Pupils feel safe. They said they know who to talk to about any concerns they have.

The school takes pride in quickly identifying what all pupils need to succeed. The systems in place ensure that pupils feel welcomed and supported. This is particularly important given the high number of pupils who join the school during the year.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development exceptionally well. The extra-curricular programme is rich and diverse. Pupils regularly take part in a wide range of clubs including music, sport, photography and chess. Many are proud to be student ambassadors, including those in the sixth form who lead these groups.

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

The school has thought carefully about the curriculum on offer to pupils. It is rooted in an ambition of academic success for all, including pupils with SEND. It has developed an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. This offers breadth and richness to pupils,

including those in the sixth form where students have access to a wide range of A-level qualifications.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They explain new information to pupils clearly. Lessons have clear structures that pupils understand. 'Do now' activities ensure that pupils reflect on prior learning before moving on to new knowledge. Pupils complete independent tasks to practise using what they know. Most teachers check that pupils understand their learning and can remember. However, sometimes, teachers move on without checking pupils' understanding thoroughly enough. When this happens, some pupils continue to have gaps in their knowledge.

The school quickly identifies pupils with SEND. The SEND coordinator and their team know pupils with SEND very well. They are committed to helping these pupils become independent learners. Targeted interventions are used to ensure that pupils with SEND succeed in lessons. Leaders ensure that all pupils access the same ambitious curriculum. The school regularly assesses and reviews pupils' learning needs. Teachers use the information this provides to adapt their teaching. This means that pupils with SEND successfully access learning and achieve well.

The school has developed a lot of strategies to support pupils who are not confident readers. Specialist teachers rapidly address weaknesses in pupils' phonics knowledge. Teachers encourage pupils to read during tutor sessions by using books in the 'DRET Reads' series. Teachers model reading by highlighting key thematic words and ideas, particularly in English lessons.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is highly effective. The school has thought carefully about personal, social and health (PSHE) education from Years 7 to 13. Through PSHE, pupils learn about a wide range of issues, such as healthy relationships, keeping safe and fundamental British values. There is a well-planned careers programme. All students receive unbiased information about their potential next steps, and high-quality careers guidance. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, discuss careers, university aspirations and apprenticeships. This prepares them well for the next stages of their lives.

All leaders, including those responsible for governance, know this school well. They understand how the local context impacts pupils' learning and attendance. Leaders review and develop all aspects of the school effectively. This includes their robust and rigorous focus on safeguarding. Trustees and governors both support and hold leaders to account for the decisions taken.

Staff are proud of their school. They feel trusted and well supported. Staff value the wide range of professional development opportunities on offer. They appreciate that leaders carefully consider their well-being and workload when planning for improvement.

## **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, some teachers do not consistently check that pupils understand what has been learned and what pupils can remember. This means that some pupils may not fully understand the key knowledge they need to know in some subjects. The school must ensure that all teachers further embed and consistently check pupils' understanding and recall at regular points in their learning and adapt their teaching accordingly.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2018.

## 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>	136201
<b>Local authority</b>	West Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10298462
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<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>	1,372
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	107
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Ross
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Stuart Burns
<b>Executive Principal</b>	Megan Morris
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.malcolmarnoldacademy.co.uk">www.malcolmarnoldacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	9 and 10 May 2018 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The executive principal has been in place since the start of September 2020.
- The school is part of The David Ross Education Trust.
- This is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Peterborough. The school's next section 48 inspection is due to take place in 2024.
- There is a specially resourced provision at the school for up to 15 pupils with a hearing impairment.
- The school uses three registered and three unregistered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.

- 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

- 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 executive principal, the principal, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees and the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, French, history, mathematics and music. 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 visited a number of lessons in other subjects.
- 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 met with pupils from a range of year groups, including pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with a range of teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation documents.

## Inspection team

Jamie Clarke, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Keval Thakrar	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Carlile	Ofsted Inspector

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