

# Inspection of Alvaston Moor Academy

Brackens Lane, Derby, Derbyshire DE24 0AN

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of the school is Michelle Strong. The school is part of the Archway Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sian Hampton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Malcombe Trobe.

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

Alvaston Moor Academy is an improving school. Following some recent changes in staffing, the school is becoming more settled and stable. A lot of changes are being made at the school to help it improve quickly. The school's curriculum, and its delivery, are being overhauled. Pupils and staff are beginning to see the positive impact of the 'AMA Way'. Many pupils say that they value the changes that are being introduced, including the rewards system.

The school is mostly calm and orderly. Pupils are well supervised. Relationships between pupils and with staff are typically positive. Most pupils say that they feel safe at school. Staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct. Most pupils respond well to these expectations. However, some lessons are disrupted by instances of poor behaviour. Sometimes, pupils leave lessons without permission. Rates of pupil removal from lessons and of suspension are high.

Pupils who attend school regularly achieve well by the end of key stage 4. However, rates of absence, while reducing, are high, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This means that these pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

The school provides high-quality pastoral care for pupils who need extra support, without compromising on the school's expectations.

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

Leaders are working with determination to improve all aspects of the school. They have received strong support and investment from the trust, including for staff's professional development. All staff have pupils' needs at heart. The school is strengthening its engagement with parents and carers and local services to share its renewed vision and high expectations, including in relation to attendance. There is much to do to improve the school further. Leaders, including trustees, recognise this.

A comprehensive review of the curriculum has taken place. Subject leaders have identified the knowledge and skills pupils are expected to learn and when. Some subjects, including English and mathematics, are at a more advanced stage of development than others.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They typically use this to plan learning activities which engage most pupils. Most pupils complete the tasks expected of them. However, pupils struggle to remember important knowledge over time. When they are unsure of what they are learning, they sometimes leave tasks incomplete or opt out of having a go for themselves. Sometimes they wait to be told what they need to know by their teachers. The school has recently raised expectations about how staff check pupils' understanding, including their recall of previous learning. However, these expectations are not yet consistently realised in the classroom.

The school has strengthened its oversight of pupils with SEND. Staff receive the right amount of information to help meet these pupils' needs. However, the academic support that staff provide is inconsistent.

The school ensures that those pupils receiving alternative education benefit from an effective provision. Recently, leaders have invested in the school's 'Engage' curriculum at key stages 3 and 4. These approaches are beginning to bring about improvement in pupils' attendance, attitudes to learning and their achievement.

The school has improved the support provided for pupils at an early stage of learning to read. These pupils are now beginning to build their confidence in reading and in using technical vocabulary.

Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported and typically achieve well.

The effectiveness of the school's programme for pupils' personal development is variable. Most pupils are well prepared for their next steps. The school is inclusive, celebrating the diversity of its community. Most pupils recognise the importance of treating others fairly and equally. However, pupils struggle to recall the knowledge they have been taught to help prepare them fully for life in modern Britain. This includes, for example, knowledge of the different protected characteristics and of the British values.

Most staff understand leaders' vision for the future development of the school. Conversely some feel there is not always a shared understanding. Some do not feel, for example, that communication is as effective as it might be. Teachers at an early stage in their career say that they are well supported.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough in, and between, different subjects. Pupils struggle to recall important knowledge over the longer term and do not achieve as highly as they should. The school should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills they need to sustain consistently high expectations in all subjects and year groups, so that all pupils remember the concepts taught over time and achieve as well as they can.
- Staff receive the information they need to help meet the needs of pupils with SEND. However, staff do not consistently prioritise the academic support these pupils require. This means that these pupils do not always complete tasks or achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that staff provide the

right support for all pupils with SEND, so that these pupils participate and achieve as well as they can.

- Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. Despite some improvement, rates of absence are particularly high for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and pupils with SEND. Consequently, these pupils do not achieve as successfully as they might. The school should ensure that pupils who require it receive the support they need so that they attend regularly.
- Instances of poor behaviour disrupt learning in lessons. Pupils are frustrated by this. Staff are too. Rates of suspension and pupil removal from lessons are high. Some pupils leave lessons without permission. As a result, pupils can be prevented from being able to learn and achieve well. The school must ensure that there are appropriate strategies in place to combat lesson disruption and internal truancy so that, over time, there is a reduction in occasions of lesson removal and suspension.
- The programme for pupils' personal development is not consistently effective. Pupils often struggle to recall important knowledge they have been taught about how the law protects people with different characteristics. They are unclear about the importance of the British values. The school needs to ensure that all pupils benefit from a high-quality programme that equips them to be fully prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Some staff have mixed views about how well leaders communicate their vision and expectations for the school's development. Some staff do not always feel that the school is as united as it could be. Leaders should ensure that all staff feel involved in the school's future direction, so that all embrace and uphold leaders' vision and expectations for future success.

## 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>	148538
<b>Local authority</b>	Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	10257099
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	889
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Malcolm Trobe CBE
<b>CEO of trust</b>	Sian Hampton
<b>Principal</b>	Michelle Strong
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.alvastonmoor.co.uk">www.alvastonmoor.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school joined the Archway Learning Trust in February 2021. The principal joined the school in September 2021.
- In June 2023, the trust implemented an interim executive board (IEB) to oversee directly the pace of improvement at the school.
- The school uses two registered, off-site alternative education provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information 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 principal and other members of the school's senior leadership team. They also met with other members of staff at the school, including staff who work directly for the trust.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust, along with the deputy chief executive officer. He also met with the chair of the board of trustees.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority and the school's local police liaison officer by telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, art, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum with subject and trust leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils from key stage 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site during social time. They spoke with several groups of pupils, both formally and informally, including members of the school's student council.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for 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' needs first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for school staff. There were few responses to Ofsted Parent View. The lead inspector considered the responses to the school's own survey of parent views.

## Inspection team

Chris Stevens, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jane Burton	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Mason	Ofsted Inspector

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