

Inspection of Ashby School

Nottingham Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire LE65 1DT

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2024

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 Jude Mellor. The school is part of LiFE 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, Chris Parkinson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Liz Warren.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ashby School is a good school that serves its community well. It has high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most pupils strive to meet these expectations. They conduct themselves well in school.

There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. Staff care about their pupils' education and well-being. Pupils feel safe and happy at school. They know that there are trusted adults they can speak to about any problems they might have. The school does not tolerate bullying.

Pupils can contribute to school life by being on the school council or by being a 'well-being champion' or a 'reading buddy'. Pupils are proud to hold these positions and know that they are making a positive contribution to their wider community. One pupil said: 'If I can put a smile on another pupil's face that means the world to me.' This view was echoed by many.

The majority of parents and carers are positive about the education their children receive. Many agreed with one parent's comment: 'Teachers and leaders genuinely and passionately care for students' well-being and development. Teachers are committed to helping pupils be all they can be.'

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

The school is managed and led very well. The school has taken swift action and worked with commitment and determination to bring about significant improvements.

The school is highly inclusive, and staff are determined to meet the needs of all pupils. It has a well-equipped and well-resourced on-site provision where pupils get opportunities to gain academic and vocational qualifications. They are taught by experts, and pupils are fully engaged and show positive attitudes to learning.

The school has identified the important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. Subject leaders have identified the core content. They have ensured that the curriculum is progressive so that pupils build on what they know. However, in 2023, pupils' progress and attainment at the end of key stages 4 and 5 did not yet reflect the impact of the curriculum improvements that the school has made.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Teachers assess pupils' knowledge and understanding frequently. Lessons start with a retrieval task to check pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. Teachers check what pupils know and demonstrate what they need to do. When this is done well, it is effective. However, formative assessment procedures are not fully embedded or consistent across all subjects. Improvements are needed to ensure that all assessments check learning and misconceptions, identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and inform future teaching.

Intended learning outcomes in lessons are ambitious. However, teachers' expectations of the work produced in some lessons are not always high enough to achieve those outcomes.

Most staff support pupils with SEND well. The school is passionate about enabling all pupils to access the full curriculum. However, the curriculum is not always as skilfully adapted in lessons as it could be in order to fully meet the learning needs of pupils with SEND.

The school sets high expectations of sixth-form students. Students apply themselves purposefully in lessons. Students are taught by knowledgeable and skilled staff. Students value the support offered. They also enjoy many opportunities to contribute to the wider life of the school.

Pupils at an early stage of learning to read are well supported. Well-trained staff provide effective support to those who need help to become more fluent readers. Pupils make good use of the library.

Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. There is a clear system in place for dealing with behaviour issues. Most pupils learn in calm classrooms. However, some pupils say that learning is disrupted in some lessons. Pupils who need extra support to manage their behaviour get it.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development well. The school provides high-quality pastoral support for pupils. Pupils know how to look after their physical and mental health. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of relationships and how to stay safe. The careers programme is of a good quality and leaders are aware of the need to develop more workplace opportunities for pupils. However, the curriculum at key stages 4 and 5 does not ensure that other faiths and cultures are taught explicitly and remembered by pupils.

The school is focusing on the right areas to improve. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and development needs. The school is strongly supported by the trust. Teachers benefit from high-quality training and coaching. They appreciate the support they receive. Leaders engage well with staff. They consider and support staff's well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some aspects of the curriculum need further refinement, especially ensuring that teachers' use of formative assessment consistently identifies gaps and

misconceptions in pupils' knowledge and that expectations are consistently high. Leaders must ensure that assessment processes and the delivery of the curriculum in all subjects are of equally high quality so that pupils learn as well as they should.

- Some pupils with SEND are not supported well enough by staff. This means that these pupils are unable to progress through the curriculum as well as they should. The school has recently introduced new systems. The school must ensure that teachers use the information about pupils with SEND to adapt how they deliver curriculum content.
- Aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education are not fully developed at key stages 4 and 5. This includes pupils' knowledge and understanding of faith and religion. As a result, pupils lack confidence when discussing what they specifically know about faith and religion. The school should place equal emphasis on all areas of SMSC education in its curriculum design.

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 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	148549
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10298556
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1528
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	484
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Liz Warren
CEO of the trust	Chris Parkinson
Headteacher	Jude Mellor
Website	www.ashbyschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the LiFE Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider and nine unregistered alternative providers.
- The school has provision on site to offer an alternative curriculum for some 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

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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of the governing body and trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: science, mathematics, English, history, modern foreign languages and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to groups of pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the view 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' interest first.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site during breaktime and lunchtime.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and staff. An inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, and to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Dawn Ashbolt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Javier Sanchez-Garcia	Ofsted Inspector
Martyn Skinner	Ofsted Inspector
Damian Painton	Ofsted Inspector
Dick Vasey	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Maingay	His Majesty's 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 looked after children, 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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024