

Inspection of Netherwood Academy

Dove Valley Way, Wombwell, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S73 8FE

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Jonny Mitchell. This school is part of Astrea 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, Rowena Hackwood, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Benjamin Brown. There is also a regional director, Rebekah Ramsden, who is responsible for this school and four others.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is determined to improve the life chances of its pupils. Pupils feel safe at this school. They have good relationships with teachers and trust adults. They learn to respect differences through the 'it stops now' campaign and have tolerant attitudes toward others. Pupils feel that bullying gets dealt with effectively when it occurs. Pupils and staff think that recent changes to behavioural policies and teaching have made a significant and positive difference.

The vast majority of pupils behave sensibly in lessons and around the school. They understand routines and expectations such as moving with 'pace and purpose' from one lesson to the next. Pupils that attend school regularly make good progress through the curriculum. They benefit from well-planned lessons and well-trained staff.

Some pupils do not attend regularly. Some pupils get suspended frequently. These pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

Pupils have opportunities to become leaders and influence the school. For example, the school council has been instrumental in introducing a one-way system to improve lesson transition. Prefects act as role models and support events such as coffee mornings for local residents. Pupils widen their cultural experiences through a range of trips and visits. For example, pupils have opportunities to attend bushcraft camps and trips to Spain and New York.

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

The school has developed a research-informed curriculum which is ambitious for all pupils. Pupils are taught how topics are relevant to the local area and wider world. They understand the importance of what they are studying. Pupils can choose from a broad range of subjects at key stage 4 that suit their interests and ambitions.

The school now has a consistent approach to teaching and learning. Teachers use this approach to plan well-structured lessons. Teachers assess pupils' understanding regularly in lessons and correct misconceptions. Although teaching is consistent, in a minority of lessons, it is not adapted sufficiently well to meet the needs of all pupils. For example, in some lessons, the most able pupils are not encouraged to discuss or think about topics in depth.

In a small number of cases, teaching is not precisely adapted to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The school's focus on teaching and learning has had significant impact. Pupils' outcomes at key stage 4 have improved considerably. Most pupils make good progress through the curriculum. The school recognises that some pupils, such as those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, need to make more progress.

Leaders have clear plans and strategies that are improving the progress these pupils make.

Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading. Pupils read in their form time as part of the 'Astrea Reads' programme. A local author visits the school every week to read with pupils. The school has invested in new library facilities and online homework platforms to support reading. The weakest readers are identified through routine testing and supported through appropriate interventions.

The school has introduced a new behavioural policy which teachers apply consistently. As a result, pupils behave well in lessons and around the school following 'core routines'. Some pupils have not fully adapted to new behavioural expectations. This has resulted in high numbers of suspensions. Pupil suspensions are reducing but are still high, particularly for vulnerable pupils. Leaders recognise this and are adapting policies to reduce suspensions further.

Some pupils do not attend school regularly. This limits the progress they make. The school has prioritised improving attendance. Strategies to improve attendance are having an impact. The school recognises that attendance needs to improve further for all groups of pupils.

The school has increased the time allocated for teaching personal, social and health education. Pupils learn about various topics, including healthy relationships, sex education and fundamental British values. They are presented with dilemmas that encourage debate and critical thinking. The school has made several improvements to the careers information and guidance that pupils receive. Pupils are well prepared for further opportunities in education, employment or training.

Leaders at all levels have made significant changes to improve the school. They have acted on the recommendations made at the previous full inspection in October 2021 and those made in the monitoring inspection in December 2022. Leaders have raised standards of behaviour and established a positive climate for learning.

Staff are extremely positive about the changes that have been made. They are well trained and work collaboratively to improve the school. Leaders ensure that staff have a healthy work-life balance.

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 lessons, teaching is not adapted sufficiently well to meet the needs of some pupils. In some cases, the most able pupils are not fully challenged and specific support for pupils with SEND sometimes lacks precision. The school

should develop adaptive teaching methods to ensure that all pupils, including those most able and those with SEND, make good progress through the curriculum.

- Some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, do not attend lessons regularly enough and miss too much learning. The school should continue to ensure that systems and resources to improve attendance are well embedded and that work continues with the community to improve attendance for all groups of pupils.
- Suspension rates for pupils, although improving, are still high. As a result, some pupils miss too much learning. The school should continue to refine systems for managing behaviour and develop positive attitudes to learning among all pupils, thereby reducing the number of suspensions.

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	143907
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10297437
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1253
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Benjamin Brown
CEO of the trust	Rowena Hackwood
Principal	Jonny Mitchell
Website	https://astreanetherwood.org/
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 December 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Netherwood Academy became an academy in May 2017.
- The school is one of 26 schools in Astrea Academy Trust.
- The principal has been in role since September 2020.
- The school uses four unregistered and three registered alternative provisions of education.
- The school's most recent graded inspection was in October 2021 where it was judged to require improvement. An urgent monitoring inspection of the school was carried out in December 2022 to consider the school's work to improve the behaviour and attitudes 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

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 met with the headteacher, other leaders, staff and pupils. They met with governors and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: science, English, modern foreign languages, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited lessons and considered how the needs of disadvantaged and pupils with SEND are addressed. They observed pupils at various times of the school day.
- Inspectors visited pupils receiving their education at the off-site Thurnscoe Centre. They spoke to pupils at this provision and observed their lessons.
- Inspectors spoke to representatives of the alternative provisions used by the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; considered the views of parents; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Chris Carr, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Greenough	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Senior	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector
Vicky Callaghan	Ofsted Inspector

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