

Inspection of Meole Brace School

Longden Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY3 9DW

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

The headteacher of this school is Alan Doust. This school is part of TrustEd Schools Alliance Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. This trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sarah Godden, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Anderson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of Meole Brace School. The school pays serious attention to ensuring that pupils know and value the importance of equality, diversity and inclusivity. This effort fosters a respectful and positive environment where pupils feel safe and enjoy attending school.

In the past, the school has not ensured that pupils achieved as well as they could, including in public examinations. Now, though, a well-designed curriculum and new approaches to teaching are having a positive impact on pupils' progress.

The school has clear expectations for how all community members should interact with each other. Staff consistently communicate these expectations, known as the 'Meole Brace Way', to the pupils. The pupils value this clarity and strive to meet these expectations.

The pupils benefit from many opportunities that positively contribute to their personal development. These include taking on significant leadership roles. The school's parliament provides recommendations for improving various aspects of the school, which the leaders take seriously. The parliament was pleased to see its suggestion for reducing queuing at lunchtime recently implemented. Additionally, the school's range of extracurricular activities, which includes music groups, sports clubs, and more, is extensive.

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

This school has undergone a period of positive and impressive change. Since the previous inspection, the school and trust leaders have worked together to significantly improve many aspects of the school's work.

The school is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). From Year 7 to Year 9, all pupils learn a wide range of subjects in depth. In Year 10 and Year 11, the school provides a wide range of courses and qualifications that match pupils' aspirations and interests.

The school ensures that pupils learn content in a logical order. Additionally, teachers give pupils regular opportunities to answer questions about topics that they have learned before. Pupils told us that this helps them to remember content they have learned in the past. Despite this, some pupils, particularly those who are less able, are sometimes given work that does not enable them to build on their previous learning or address gaps in their knowledge. This makes it harder for these pupils to achieve consistently well.

The school thoroughly identifies pupils who may have SEND. Once identified, their needs are carefully assessed. Recent changes have led to a more holistic support approach, with pastoral leaders and the SEND team working closely together.

Support for these pupils in class is well-focused to enable them to learn alongside their peers.

Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and explain new concepts clearly and accurately. Additionally, they foster positive learning environments, where they are supportive and approachable. Pupils feel comfortable participating and seeking help in lessons. However, staff do not consistently ensure that all pupils produce work to the best of their ability, which hinders the progress of some pupils.

The school has a clear strategy for supporting all pupils to become confident readers. They make suitable checks to identify pupils' who need extra help. Prompt action ensures that pupils get the help they need from well-trained adults. As a result, these pupils are making significant gains in their reading.

The school has an impressive knowledge of each pupil, underpinned by comprehensive and systematic tracking. It pays close attention to identifying and removing any barriers to pupils' success. Pupils, for instance, whose attendance is low, receive well-tailored and effective support to improve.

Pupils concentrate well in lessons. Little learning time is lost. During lesson changeovers pupils behave sensibly and maturely while moving, without fuss, around the school building. The school's behaviour policy places a strong emphasis on rewarding positive and respectful attitudes. Teachers implement this policy well. Pupils enjoy school, attend well and are increasingly punctual.

The school's personal, social, health, and economic (PSHE) curriculum is a notable strength. Pupils receive the necessary information at the right time and obtain high-quality and impartial information about the working world.

Subject leaders understand the importance of making checks on how well the curriculum in their areas is working. Despite this, there are inconsistencies in how they do this. This means the school does not have a full picture of what is working well and what needs further refinement.

Those responsible for governance understand their roles and responsibilities clearly. They gather information from a range of areas to inform their views of the school. These include the views of pupils, visits to the school and external reports. All of this means, they have an accurate view of school and are well placed to drive further improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, some pupils are given work that does not enable them to build on their previous learning or address gaps in their learning. This makes it harder for them to achieve consistently well. The school should ensure that all staff in all subjects consistently provide pupils with work that is well matched to their starting points.
- Teachers do not consistently ensure that all pupils produce work to the best possible standard. This hampers their progress. The school should ensure that all teachers routinely expect and support pupils to complete their work to a high standard so that they can all achieve to the best of their ability.
- There are inconsistencies in how the school evaluates the effectiveness of the quality of education in some subjects. This means that the school does not have a full picture of what is working well and what needs further refinement across all of the curriculum. The school should strengthen systems to check and evaluate the impact of their work.

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	146146
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10318989
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1343
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Anderson
Headteacher	Alan Doust
Website	www.meolebrace.com
Date(s) of previous inspection	10 and 11 May 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is one of nine schools in the TrustEd Schools Alliance.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 9 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- 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 senior leaders, school staff and trust leaders. The lead inspector spoke with the chair of the trust board, trustees and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors looked closely at the curriculum in mathematics, English, science and modern foreign languages. They held discussions about the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited other lessons in different subjects and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school.
- 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 considered responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation. This included the school's positional statement, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, behaviour records, attendance records and minutes of meetings held by the trust board and local governing body.

Inspection team

Christopher Stevens, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Madden	His Majesty's Inspector
Jane Epton	Ofsted Inspector

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