

Inspection of Astrea Academy Sheffield

Andover Street, Sheffield S3 9BE

Inspection dates:

30 November and 1 December 2022

Overall effectiveness

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are passionate about ensuring that pupils receive an ambitious curriculum. That vision is realised. Pupils across the school benefit from a good quality of education. They are supported by kind teachers who help them to do well.

The majority of pupils behave well. Those in the early years quickly settle into new routines and listen attentively to their teachers. Across both primary and secondary phases, lessons and corridors are calm. Pupils focus on their learning. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident to report any concerns. They know that adults will help them. However, too many secondary-age pupils receive detentions and suspensions. Too many of these are the result of a cumulation of negative points for minor transgressions. Parents of these pupils are concerned by this.

There is a strong culture of tolerance and respect for others at this school. Primary-age pupils told inspectors, 'Everyone is treated the same, we are all happy.' Leaders are proud of their Astrea 'Promise' in the primary phase and the 'Electives' in the secondary phase. These enable pupils to have access to a range of wider experiences. Primary-age pupils have worked with a local food bank, and key stage 3 pupils talk enthusiastically about the different clubs and trips they have taken part in. These opportunities help pupils to understand the wider world around them.

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

There is an ambitious curriculum in place across the school which highlights the important knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn. The journey of building subject knowledge starts in the early years, where careful thought is given to what children should learn. This ensures they are ready for key stage 1. At all key stages, leaders have identified the subject-specific vocabulary that they want pupils to learn and use. Pupils, including the youngest in the Reception Year, increasingly use this language in their response to questions.

In most subjects, particularly in the secondary phase, teachers have strong subject knowledge. Teachers plan sequences of learning that match the ambition of the planned curriculum. Teachers' subject knowledge in the primary phase is not as consistently strong as it is in the secondary phase. On occasions, teachers in the primary phase are not aware that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. As a result, some pupils are not fully prepared for their next task and so do not develop a consistent depth of knowledge over time.

Pupils at the earliest stages of learning to read are well supported by trained staff. Those pupils who need additional help with their reading receive the support they need. As a result, pupils quickly learn to read with confidence and fluency.

As the school has grown, leaders have increased the numbers of staff who support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This team expertly

identifies those pupils with SEND who need additional help. Some pupils have complex needs. Leaders have ensured that these pupils are well supported. All teaching staff receive training to ensure that, where possible, pupils with SEND are able to access the same curriculum as their peers. In the primary setting, pupils' emotional and communication gains are carefully tracked. Each small but important gain is celebrated.

Central to leaders' vision is that pupils are kept safe, and that the learning environment is free from distraction and disruption. This means that every pupil can benefit from the ambitious curriculum in place. In the primary phase, there is a calm and orderly environment where staff gently remind pupils of the school rules. Children in the early years quickly learn how to 'sit like a scholar'. They know that teachers are fair and kind, and they understand the importance of following the school rules.

The great majority of pupils in the secondary phase are polite and respectful. Lessons are calm. Most pupils focus on their learning. Pupils with particular needs are well supported to help them make better choices. However, too many pupils, including those who are vulnerable, receive detentions and suspensions due to an accumulation of negative points for minor infractions of the school's behaviour policy. The numbers of sanctions are increasing over time. Pupils miss out on important learning. The parents of these pupils are unhappy about this. They do not feel that leaders have listened to their concerns.

Leaders have strengthened the provision for pupils' wider development. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is in place from the early years to Year 11. A careers adviser provides Year 11 pupils with personalised guidance. The work to strengthen pupils' knowledge of different careers from an early age is in its early stages.

Governors and trustees provide effective support. They check for themselves that what leaders tell them is accurate. They know the importance of checking that all pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged or have SEND, receive the help that they need. Leaders value the support they receive from external partners, including the local authority. Staff are well supported. They know that leaders consider their well-being and workload. Over the course of the inspection, leaders listened carefully to concerns raised over the impact of the current behaviour system in the secondary phase. Leaders evidenced a thoughtful and considered approach. They know that there is work to do to engage positively with the wider community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff have regular and thorough safeguarding training. There are frequent briefings and reminders. Leaders check that all staff know the signs that suggest a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff promptly report any concerns they have about the safety and well-being of pupils. Leaders swiftly follow

up these concerns. Important safeguarding records show the careful and prompt approach that leaders take to ensure that all pupils are kept safe.

Pupils learn about a range of important safeguarding topics. They know how to keep themselves safe when online. Pupils learn about how to be a good friend and how to have healthy relationships with others.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some parents have concerns about the application of the behaviour policy in the secondary setting. This is having a negative effect on the school's relationship with some parents and carers. Leaders should work more closely with parents and carers to develop positive relationships that will enable all stakeholders to contribute to further success for all pupils.
- Leaders' behaviour policy results in secondary-age pupils frequently receiving detentions and suspensions for an accumulation of low-level poor behaviour. This results in pupils missing important learning unnecessarily. Leaders should ensure that consequences are fair and proportionate, and enable pupils to engage positively with the school.
- In a few subjects, pupils are not able to recall important knowledge from the taught curriculum. This is because some teachers do not have a sufficiently strong subject knowledge. They do not consistently pick up on gaps in pupils' knowledge and address these. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the support and training to identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge so that all pupils achieve well.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	145864
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10255577
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	2 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	974
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Benjamin Brown
Co-Principals	Emma Glover and Rachel Flemming
Website	www.astreasheffield.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is the first inspection since the school opened in September 2018. The school is part of Astrea Academy Trust.
- At the time of the current inspection, there were pupils attending in the Reception Year and in Years 1 to 4. In the secondary phase, there were pupils attending in Years 7 to 11. Leaders are planning to welcome Year 12 students from September 2023.
- The school runs a nursery for children aged three to four years.
- There are two co-principals in position, with responsibility for primary and secondary phase respectively. The current principal with responsibility for the secondary phase was formally appointed in March 2022.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, 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 inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including the trust regional directors for primary and secondary phases, as well as trustees and members of the local governance committee.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders for behaviour and attendance, pastoral support and careers. Inspectors spoke with teachers at the early stages of their teaching career.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, history, science and reading. 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 also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in PSHE and in reading. An inspector listened to pupils read. Inspectors visited lessons in wider subjects.
- Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding records. They spoke with staff about how they keep children safe.
- The views of parents were considered through the responses to Ofsted's Parent survey and through telephone conversations held with some parents. The views of pupils were considered through responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, as well as through meetings held with pupils.
- The views of staff were considered through meetings held with staff and from the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Eleanor Belfield, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector
Katie Spurr	His Majesty's Inspector

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