

Inspection of Coppice Academy

Abbots Way, Westlands, Newcastle, Staffordshire ST5 2EY

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 February 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Diane Ahearn. This school is part of the Shaw Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jo Heard-Jones, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Meehan.

What is it like to attend this school?

Coppice Academy truly is a very special school. Pupils are surrounded by care, hope and ambition. They come here for many reasons related to their special educational needs and/or disabilities. They leave as excited and ambitious learners, proud to be members of the Staffordshire community.

Pupils feel happy and safe because the school treats them with kindness and care. Autistic spectrum conditions, learning and cognition needs, speech, language, and other varying needs could make learning harder for Coppice pupils. However, staff, parents and carers work together to overcome any barriers caused by those needs. Pupils are valued as individuals, and this inspires their learning.

Positive relationships are what makes this a unique community. Friendship and care underpin relationships between pupils. Calmness and purpose permeate all classes. Occasionally, some pupils have difficult moments managing their emotions. However, caring and attentive staff work quickly to ensure they get the right support. Consequently, behaviour is generally exemplary.

An impressive range of school clubs enrich pupils' hobbies and ambitions. Basketball, football, virtual and physical construction, choir and sketchbooks are some of the ways that pupils develop personal hobbies and interests. Trips to places like the National Memorial Arboretum provide a moment for pupils to reflect and appreciate local history.

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

Supported by a caring and attentive multi-academy trust, inspirational leaders and caring staff combine to get the best outcomes for pupils. There is an unrelenting conviction that things can always get better. This community is committed to overcoming individual pupil barriers to learning to enable pupils to have a fulfilling, independent life.

When pupils arrive, staff spend time researching and learning what motivates them. The school works closely with pupils' previous schools and families. They establish how to build upon successes or address problems in their educational experiences. The school also works effectively with additional services, such as sensory support services and speech and language specialists. As a result, staff precisely adapt learning and resources to support individual need.

The school is ambitious about what pupils will learn while at Coppice. Across all subjects, the school has developed a demanding curriculum that sets out the important knowledge that pupils should know and remember. There are many good examples of how the school sequences this knowledge so that pupils' learning builds over time. Opportunities to practise newly learned knowledge are frequently included so that pupils can embed it into their long-term memories.

Some pupils enter the school unable to read. The school quickly identifies the gaps in their phonic knowledge and puts in place intervention to support pupils to learn to read.

Staff receive effective support to deliver phonics and find alternative support programmes for those struggling to read. Pupils who learn to read fluently then develop their comprehension skills and enjoy reading books from a range of authors and genres.

Pupils are excited to come to school, so many have excellent attendance. For those with less positive attendance, the school acts quickly to provide the right help. It works with services such as children's and adult mental health and youth offending services to work with the pupil and their family to remove the barriers to higher levels of attendance. Parents appreciate such support.

Pupils are confident, resilient and happy young people who demonstrate a real strength of character. Independent living and work skill sessions help develop pupils' understanding of the world around them and foster a developed understanding of what jobs could be available for them when they leave education. Personal, social, health and economic education sessions support pupils' understanding of the risks they may face in the real or online world.

Staff are proud to be members of this community. They get the support and training they need to deliver the curriculum well and to meet pupils' needs. Parents are equally proud of the school and speak effusively about their children's experiences and care. One parent, whose views reflected the views of others, said that because of Coppice, they had 'had the greatest delight in watching [their child] blossom into the young [person] they are now!'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	141449
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10294605
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	110
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Meehan
CEO of the trust	Jo Heard-Jones
Principal	Diane Ahearn
Website	www.coppiceacademy.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 January 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any form of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.

- 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: English (including early reading), mathematics, science, and design and technology. In these subjects, they visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils and staff about how these subjects were taught. Inspectors also looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were planned and taught.
- Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject teachers, members of the local academy council and pupils. They also talked informally with parents, carers, pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors spoke to staff and sampled the provision for a group of pupils in depth to understand the quality of identification, assessment and provision for pupils.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- An inspector also spoke with representatives of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tony Bradshaw

His Majesty's Inspector

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