

Inspection of Netherthorpe School

Ralph Road, Staveley, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S43 3PU

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The education that pupils receive at this school is too variable. In some lessons, teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough. In other lessons, teaching is not as effective as it could be. Pupils say that the behaviour of other pupils can interrupt their learning. Teachers deal with poor behaviour inconsistently and sometimes ineffectively.

Most pupils are of the opinion that there are positive aspects of school that help them enjoy their school experience some of the time. Many pupils agree that most teachers help them to do their best in lessons. Pupils say that there is someone to talk to if there is a problem. Many pupils understand that bullying will not be tolerated by teachers and the school will deal with it. Most pupils feel safe and happy.

There are lots of opportunities for pupil leadership. Pupils represent one of the three houses proudly. There are plenty of extra-curricular activities for pupils to be involved in. As one pupil described, 'there are loads of clubs'. Not all the pupils are yet benefiting from the school's work to make them more confident, resilient and independent.

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

Leaders have constructed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils to study. There is a broad range of subjects on offer in key stage 4. Subject leaders have thought carefully about the knowledge they want pupils to know. They have planned each subject so that pupils can build on prior knowledge and build a depth of understanding.

Most teachers have good subject knowledge. Many teachers check that pupils have remembered important knowledge before they move on. Some teachers move too quickly onto the next phase of learning without checking if pupils understand the important components that underpin the next phase of learning. Some pupils give up easily and become distracted because they do not know how to undertake new learning due to gaps in their knowledge. These pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Many teachers match work closely to what pupils need to learn. When this happens, pupils achieve and produce high-quality work. There are occasions when teachers do not match work closely enough to what pupils need to learn. Pupils do not produce high-quality work as a result. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Teachers and other adults support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to ensure that they access the same learning as others. Some of the targets for pupils with SEND are too broad. The staff that support these pupils

do not always know what small steps pupils with SEND need to take to achieve these broad objectives.

Leaders want all staff to build positive relationships with pupils. Leaders see this as a key to improving behaviour at the school. Staff are caring and nurturing. However, the behaviour at this school is not yet good. Some staff do not follow the protocols for managing pupils' poor behaviour consistently enough. There are occasions when a minority of pupils cause disruption around the school site. Staff do not all have consistently high expectations of behaviour in classrooms. Staff do not always challenge low-level disruption and off-task behaviour quickly enough. Some pupils do not commit to their study as a result.

Pupils benefit from age-appropriate relationships education. Many pupils are proud to display the badges they receive for their achievements on their blazers. Leaders have increased the capacity for pastoral support for pupils. They are aware that there needs to be more effective work to support some pupils to become resilient and develop strength of character. Leaders are in the early stages of embedding this work.

Students in the sixth form receive a high-quality academic offer. They are well prepared for their future next steps. The expert knowledge of staff helps students achieve the ambitious aims of the curriculum. There are plenty of opportunities for students to get involved in mentoring younger pupils. Students speak highly about the sixth-form provision.

Trustees are not well enough advised by the shared service team and academy improvement board (AIB). Trustees and those responsible for governance have been unable to support and challenge school leaders effectively enough to maintain high standards of behaviour and education. Staff know that school leaders take their well-being and workload into consideration. New senior leaders have the determination and capacity to realise their vision of providing a high-quality education at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have provided training so that staff know the signs that a pupil might need help. Staff are vigilant and they report concerns using well-known protocols that are set out in the school's safeguarding policy.

Safeguarding leaders maintain detailed safeguarding records. Leaders take swift and appropriate action to help pupils. Safeguarding leaders work in partnership with other agencies. This is to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are well supported.

Trustees and the AIB are aware of their statutory safeguarding responsibilities. They have the skill set to check that the school maintains a strong safeguarding culture.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not all routinely check that pupils have remembered the prerequisite knowledge required for future learning. This leaves some pupils with gaps in their understanding and unable to achieve as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently check that pupils know the most important knowledge before moving on to new learning.
- Not all teachers consistently match activities closely enough to the aims of the curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not produce work of high quality. Leaders should ensure that the activities that teachers choose match closely to what pupils need to learn.
- Leaders have not ensured that the broad targets for pupils with SEND are always broken down into small steps. Some teachers cannot support some pupils with SEND effectively enough. Leaders should ensure that the broad targets for all pupils with SEND are broken down and that teachers can use these to support pupils to learn the curriculum.
- Not all staff deal with pupils' poor behaviour consistently. Some pupils do not follow the school rules and cause disruption as a result. Leaders must ensure that all staff consistently apply the behaviour policy.
- Some teachers are too slow to react to incidents of off-task behaviour and low-level disruption. They do not have high enough expectations of pupils. As a result, pupils do not commit to their study as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that all teachers have high expectations of pupils and deal with low-level disruption and off-task behaviour in lessons consistently and quickly.
- Leaders are aware that there are some elements of the wider curriculum offer in the early stages of being developed. The wider curriculum offer does not yet sharply enough focus on building all pupils' resilience, independence and strength of character. Leaders must continue to develop and embed this strand of personal development so that pupils develop character traits that will support better attitudes to learning.
- Trustees are not well enough advised by the shared service team and the AIB. They are unable to challenge and support school leaders to maintain high enough standards of behaviour and education. Trustees must ensure that those responsible for advising them are able to accurately assure school leaders' self-evaluations.

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	137902
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10227770
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1158
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	261
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Karen Robinson
Headteacher	Helen McVicar
Website	www.netherthorpe.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Cavendish Learning Trust.
- A new headteacher took up her substantive role in September 2021.
- The school uses four unregistered providers and one registered alternative provider for 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 qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in design and technology, mathematics, English, history and religious education. For each deep dive, the inspectors

discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also visited a range of lessons in other subjects. For these subjects, they looked at pupils' work and subject plans, and spoke to pupils.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for: behaviour; personal development; reading; the sixth form; children looked after; the use of the pupil premium funding and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. He reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- An inspector met with early career teachers and their mentors.
- The lead inspector met with trustees, members of the academy improvement board and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Vic Wilkinson	His Majesty's Inspector
Mark Rhatigan	Ofsted Inspector
Debbie Ridley	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Sheppard	Ofsted Inspector

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