

Inspection of City of Derby Academy

Farmhouse Road, Sinfin, Derby, Derbyshire DE24 3AR

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff and pupils agree that they celebrate the diversity of all those who attend. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to this school and that they have good relationships with their teachers. This is one of the reasons why many pupils feel safe and happy. Leaders promote a welcoming and caring ethos at the school.

Many teachers have high expectations of behaviour. They remind and encourage pupils to be 'the three Rs'. Many pupils, as a result, are respectful, responsible and ready to achieve. When pupils demonstrate 'the three Rs', teachers are quick to praise them. However, not all teachers have high-enough expectations of pupils. Some do not challenge pupils well enough to engage with their learning when they adopt off-task behaviours.

The quality of education that pupils receive in lessons is variable. Teachers do not always choose the most appropriate activities to help pupils remember important facts.

Pupils agree that bullying does happen from time to time. They are also confident that teachers deal with it appropriately when they see it or when pupils report it to them.

Leaders try to engage the community at every opportunity. For example, they hold parents' evenings in community centres located close to where pupils live. This makes it easier for more parents to attend.

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

Leaders have improved this school considerably from when it first joined the multi-academy trust. The leaders have a clear vision and high ambitions for all pupils. Trustees and governors have challenged and supported the school leaders well. Leaders are determined to improve pupils' life chances.

Leaders have adopted a clear and ambitious curriculum. They have trained teachers and subject leaders to construct a curriculum that revisits and repeats the most important concepts. This helps many pupils to develop a depth of learning in many subjects.

The 'CODA code' sets out how lessons should be structured. Some teachers do not follow this code consistently. Activities teachers choose for pupils to complete do not always match what pupils need to learn. Sometimes, resources and materials distract pupils' attention from the important knowledge pupils need to remember.

In some lessons, teachers use assessment well, either to check that pupils remember important knowledge, or to embed knowledge. In some lessons and in some subjects, such as mathematics and geography, teachers do not use assessment well enough. Teachers ignore misconceptions they find when assessing

pupils' work. There are some lessons in which teachers' assessment shows that large groups of pupils do not understand or remember important knowledge. In these lessons, some teachers continue to move learning forward regardless. They do not ensure that pupils fully understand what they have already learned before doing so. When this happens, pupils get left behind.

Many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language, receive support so that they achieve as well as their peers. For a small number, teachers and other adults who support these pupils do not consider the pupils' needs well enough and do not set work that is sufficiently demanding.

There is a calm and orderly environment during break and at lunchtimes. Most pupils are polite, courteous and respectful. Attendance is much improved. Exclusions have reduced. Pupils do occasionally fall out with each other. Leaders are quick to resolve these issues and apply appropriate sanctions if necessary.

Behaviour in some lessons is still not good enough. There are occasions when pupils talk over each other and are not on task. Some teachers do not challenge this. There are times when teachers have low expectations of how pupils should engage with learning.

There are many opportunities to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They have a good understanding of healthy relationships. They learn to respect and accept those who are different to them. They benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities that the school offers, such as Cadets and the Green Power Club. Most of all, pupils benefit from support they receive from caring staff in helping them to grow as individuals.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a thorough understanding of how to report safeguarding concerns. They are trained to recognise abuse, neglect or changes to behaviour which might indicate a pupil is at risk. Staff report the smallest of concerns as they know it will help leaders build a bigger picture.

Safeguarding leaders act swiftly when a pupil needs help. Leaders work closely with external agencies and challenge them to safeguard pupils effectively.

Pupils say there is always someone to talk to if they have a worry. They are confident that adults will listen and help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The activities teachers choose for pupils to complete do not always match well to what pupils need to learn. When this is the case, some pupils do not learn important knowledge as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that all teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to match the activities they set pupils closely to the knowledge pupils need to learn.
- Leaders have developed a strategy for assessment which enables teachers to check for misconceptions and embed knowledge. The implementation of this is variable. There are occasions when teachers do not correct pupils' misconceptions. Some teachers move pupils on to new learning before they have ensured that pupils understand the knowledge they need to access that learning. Leaders must ensure that all teachers have the necessary knowledge of how the school's assessment strategies work, so that they can support pupils effectively to understand fully the concepts they are learning.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers and other adults who support pupils with SEND take into account these pupils' additional needs when setting them work. On occasions, teachers and other adults set these pupils work that is insufficiently demanding. When this is the case, the ambitious aims of the curriculum cannot be met. Leaders must ensure that the implementation of the curriculum considers the needs of pupils with SEND as well as their ability.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff consistently follow the school's behaviour policy. Some teachers do not challenge low-level disruption and off-task behaviour. As a result, some lessons can be disrupted. Leaders must ensure that all staff follow the school's behaviour policy consistently and have the highest expectations for behaviour in lessons.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	145132
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10212011
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	964
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jane Shepherd
Headteacher	Philip Smith
Website	www.cityofderbyacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- City of Derby Academy joined QEGSMAT multi-academy trust in September 2017.
- The school provides full-time alternative education for a small number of pupils at two registered providers. These are The Kingsmead School and Derby Pride Academy.
- The school uses two unregistered providers for full and half-day education provision for a small number of pupils. These are Spirit and Soul Equine Centre and Engineering Learning Derby.
- The school meets all 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 inspectors carried out this 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 and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in art, English, mathematics, history and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject 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 checked the work pupils had produced.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development, the on-site alternative provision and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from key stages 3 and 4.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader and child protection officer 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. Inspectors also reviewed internal and external quality assurance documents for several subjects.
- Inspectors met with all teachers and a group of support staff.
- The lead inspector met with trustees, the chair of governors and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The lead inspector visited the on-site alternative provision. The lead inspector contacted the unregistered alternative provisions which are attended by a small number of pupils at this school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff questionnaires and Ofsted pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steve Lewis	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Sheppard	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Dawn Ashbolt	Her Majesty's Inspector

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