

Inspection of Astrea Academy Dearne

Goldthorpe Road, Goldthorpe, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S63 9EW

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The quality of education at Astrea Academy Dearne has improved rapidly since the appointment of the new headteacher this academic year. The actions that leaders have taken have had a positive impact on the life of the school.

The school's curriculum is well thought through. Pupils' experiences in lessons have improved over time.

Leaders have raised the expectations of pupil behaviour. Pupils typically behave well. The atmosphere throughout school is calm and positive. Suspensions are falling quickly as pupils become used to the new behaviour systems. As a result, pupils are now able to learn with little interruption. However, some parents and pupils are concerned about the school's approach to managing behaviour.

Pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities, ranging from sport, to the Duke of Edinburgh award, to the Combined Cadet Force. Leaders are keen to ensure that as many pupils as possible participate in these activities to promote their wider development. At present, the number of pupils who make good use of these opportunities varies between year groups.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum. They have identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember. When designing the curriculum, leaders have ensured that new content connects to what pupils already know. They have identified the gaps in knowledge that some pupils have. In many lessons, these gaps are addressed well through the activities teachers use to deliver learning. Leaders are aware that this is more successful in some lessons than others.

As a result of the improvements to the design and delivery of the curriculum, pupils now know and remember much of the important knowledge they have been taught. They are also closing the gaps in knowledge they previously once had. Many of the changes to the curriculum have been recently implemented. As such, some older pupils have only recently benefited from this work. Therefore, in recent years, pupils in key stage 4 have not achieved as well as they could in external examinations.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive a carefully planned curriculum. This includes those pupils who access their learning in the school's specialist resourced provisions. Leaders ensure that staff understand pupils' needs. Pupils are well supported to access the curriculum.

Improving pupil behaviour has been a priority for leaders. Leaders introduced a new behaviour policy in September 2022. There is now a consistent approach to managing behaviour throughout school. Pupils routinely behave well and respect the rules in place. The implementation of the new policy initially led to a high number of suspensions and permanent exclusions. This has reduced significantly over the

course of the academic year. Leaders track suspensions carefully and ensure that pupils who are at risk of repeat suspension receive additional support. The revised approach to managing pupils' behaviour means that teachers can teach with little disruption to lessons. Staff and many pupils appreciate the work that leaders have done to improve the standards of behaviour across the school.

Leaders are taking appropriate actions to improve attendance. This is important as some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Additional staff have been appointed to the attendance team. There are new systems in place to promote and manage pupil attendance. Leaders and staff ensure that the school community is aware of the importance of attending school every day.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Much of this comes through the 'preparation for adult life' lessons, assemblies and morning line-ups. Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe, as well as the importance of respecting equality and diversity. Leaders provide leadership opportunities, for example through the Combined Cadet Force or the Duke of Edinburgh Award. However, some pupils do not routinely make active contributions in lessons or to the school as a whole. Some pupils need support to develop their levels of confidence, resilience and independence. Careers guidance is well planned. Pupils receive appropriate and helpful information on the options open to them in the future.

Leaders, including those from the multi-academy trust, have rightly prioritised key areas of the school that needed rapid improvement. At times, not all stakeholders have been fully on board with some of the actions that leaders had to take. These actions have, however, had a significant impact on improving pupil behaviour and the quality of education. Staff are proud to work at Astrea Academy Dearne. They value the actions that leaders have taken. These changes have had a positive impact on staff's workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are proactive in developing the culture of safeguarding at the school. All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. There are regular updates and briefings to ensure that safeguarding is kept as a high priority. Staff are confident to identify and report any concerns regarding pupils who may be at risk of harm.

Knowledgeable leaders work closely with outside agencies and safeguarding partners to seek advice and support for pupils who may be at risk. Leaders ensure that pupils are fully aware of local risks.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils are absent from school on a regular basis. These pupils miss out on learning and have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should further embed their approach to securing improved levels of attendance across the school.
- Some pupils are hesitant to contribute fully in lessons and to the wider life of the school. The wider development programme in place is not supporting these pupils to fully develop the levels of confidence, resilience and independence needed for life after school. Leaders should establish a coherent programme for character development to support pupils to develop the skills and qualities needed to thrive at, and beyond, school.
- The implementation of the curriculum does not consistently help pupils to make connections between what they are currently learning and what they have learned previously. In some lessons, pupils struggle to link their knowledge together and think deeper about key concepts. Leaders should ensure that the implementation of the curriculum consistently allows pupils to go beyond recalling facts and develop a deep body of knowledge in all subjects.

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	146501
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10268162
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1157
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Benjamin Brown
Principal	Eddie Child
Website	www.astreadearne.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has been part of the Astrea multi-academy trust since February 2019.
- The school was formerly known as 'The Dearne Advanced Learning Centre'. The most recent full inspection of the predecessor school took place in November 2016.
- The school operates a SEND resource base and a specialist SEND unit to provide support for pupils with complex needs.
- The current principal was appointed in September 2022 in an interim capacity and substantively from February 2023.
- The school uses one unregistered provider of alternative education on a part-time basis.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in science, English, geography, history, business studies and computing. As part of the deep dives, inspectors visited lessons, reviewed curriculum plans and spoke with curriculum leaders and teachers. They also talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work they have completed.
- In addition, inspectors looked at curriculum plans and discussed assessment in languages, psychology and physical education.
- Inspectors met with the SEND coordinator, reviewed educational health care plans and support plans for pupils with SEND, and visited lessons to see how pupils with SEND are supported to learn. This included the school's specialist resourced provisions.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for reading to discuss how reading is promoted in the school.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leads and reviewed a range of documentation, including safeguarding records and policies.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through Ofsted surveys, as well as additional communication from parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's records of bullying, reviewed the actions leaders take when bullying occurs and spoke to several groups of pupils, including some single-gender groups, to understand their experience of school.
- Inspectors met leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and reviewed the school's data on suspensions and internal suspensions.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the multi-academy trust and from the trust management board.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to attendance and the number of pupils' who have joined or left the school roll.

Inspection team

Stuart Voyce, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Chris Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector
David Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Hubbard	Ofsted Inspector
Julian Appleyard	Ofsted Inspector

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