Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Denewood Academy

Denewood Academy, 113 Forest Road West, Radford, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG7 4ES

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 May 2025

Outcome

Denewood Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The executive headteacher of this school is Elizabeth Browne. This school is part of Raleigh 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), Sean Kelly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Eileen Hartley.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe. They enjoy positive relationships with staff and their peers and benefit from a respectful and inclusive culture. Staff have high expectations. They help pupils to re-engage with education and support them to move on to appropriate and sustained destinations.

Staff help pupils to behave very well. Pupils learn how to self-regulate and understand that some pupils may need additional support to conduct themselves appropriately. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in school, at home and in the wider community. They talk to staff if they are concerned about something. Pupils are confident that staff will help them to resolve any issues that may arise.

Most pupils attend regularly as they do not want to miss their learning and the other activities that the school provides. They experience a range of purposeful enrichment opportunities that broaden and deepen their knowledge and skills. They talk fondly about residential visits and trips to places such as a local castle, an ice rink and the countryside.

Pupils value their learning and enjoy a range of subjects. They understand how what they are studying now will help them in adulthood. For example, they know that reading, mathematics and cooking are important life skills.

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

The school identifies quickly and meets the needs of all pupils effectively. Pupils develop their reading, writing, communication and mathematical knowledge, along with other life skills, through an ambitious, well sequenced and appropriately adapted curriculum. However, a small number of subjects are not yet delivered as well as the vast majority. Where this is the case, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Reading is a priority. Staff encourage pupils to read regularly. They support them well to help pupils understand what they read. Staff make sure that pupils who are at the early stages of reading develop the phonics knowledge and language comprehension they need for future learning. Most pupils are confident, fluent and expressive readers.

Staff work well as an upbeat team. They use assessment effectively. Staff check that pupils understand what they are learning and address any gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils' extremely positive behaviour reflects the school's high expectations of their conduct. They value the 'golden rules' which support them to follow appropriate routines. This helps pupils develop a positive and committed attitude to learning.

The school and the trust work well to reduce absence, and actively address any barriers to regular attendance. Staff work with pupils, families, other schools and a range of external agencies to reduce absence. Most pupils' attendance is stronger than their previous record.

Personal development is exceptional. Pupils access a wide set of opportunities that enhance their knowledge and understanding of the wider world. They benefit from a range of trips and visits which most would not have experienced in their previous settings. The school also gives pupils the opportunity to develop and extend their talents and interests. For example, one pupil recently won a regional cooking competition. Pupils develop positive characteristics, such as confidence, respect and resilience. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is deeply embedded throughout the school's provision. Pupils understand equality and diversity and appreciate similarities and differences in the world and between its people.

The setting prepares pupils for future success in their education, employment and training exceptionally well. They receive appropriate careers education. Pupils access good quality, meaningful opportunities to experience the world of work.

The school is well led and managed. School leaders have built upon the strengths and improved other aspects of the provision. The school engages positively with staff, supports their well-being and considers staff's workload when making decisions.

The trust, along with the local governing body, has ensured that Denewood Academy has a clear vision and that resources are used well. Those responsible for governance have

made sure that the school fulfils its statutory duties and that systems are working as intended.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of subjects are not yet delivered effectively enough. This means that pupils do not learn and achieve well in these areas. The school should ensure that the high-quality implementation of the curriculum evident in many subjects is embedded securely in every area, and pupils' learning is secure across the curriculum.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2020.

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	144022
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10379590
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Academy alternative provision sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Eileen Hartley
CEO of the trust	Sean Kelly
Executive Principal	Elizabeth Browne
Website	denewood.raleightrust.org
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes to the senior leadership team since the last inspection. The executive principal assumed this role in January 2023, and the head of school began in this role in July 2024. One assistant principal started in September 2022, another in September 2023 and the third in April 2025.
- The number of pupils on site has increased since the last inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to the executive principal, the head of school, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with two governors, including the chair, and two trustees, including the chair of trustees. He also met with the CEO.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors looked at 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.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also reviewed responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Tayler	Ofsted Inspector

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