

Inspection of Alvaston Junior Academy

Elvaston Lane, Alvaston, Derby, Derbyshire, DE24 0PU

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Christine Bower. This school is part of The Harmony Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Anthony Hughes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew McCully.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils recognise and appreciate the positive relationships they have with staff. They receive high-quality pastoral support. Pupils know that they must be kind and respect others. They understand that everyone is different, but equal. They know they can speak to a trusted adult about a worry, no matter how small. Pupils feel safe and happy. They enjoy attending this school.

All pupils benefit from studying the broad and ambitious 'inspire curriculum', however teaching of the curriculum is not always consistently high quality.

Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave. Pupils follow the school's 'STARS' rules. Teachers are consistent in their approach to manage pupils' behaviour. This ensures that the school is calm and orderly, and a place where pupils can learn.

Pupils benefit from lunchtime activities in which they get to participate in sports and games. Pupils who prefer to be in a less busy environment can attend the 'In Club'. However, further opportunities to develop pupils' talents, interests and character are not well established.

Parents and carers value the visibility of staff at the start and end of the school day. They feel they are better listened to than they were previously.

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

All pupils benefit from studying a broad curriculum. The school has defined the aims they want pupils to achieve in each subject and in each year group. This is commonly known at the school as 'crucial curriculum content'. Units of work are logically organised so that pupils can build on the learning they have undertaken before. However not all teachers, understand what this means in practice. They do not always sharply focus on what is most important for pupils to grasp in each lesson. Those responsible for curriculum leadership are at the early stages of understanding how to monitor and evaluate teaching and the curriculum's impact on pupils' learning. As a result, there is not always a sharp understanding of the improvements to prioritise for each subject.

Reading is a priority at this school. Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), as well as pupils who are at an earlier stage of reading, benefit from an age-appropriate phonics curriculum. Teachers deliver the reading curriculum consistently. This helps pupils become better readers and access the wider curriculum. Pupils read widely and often and develop an appreciation for books.

There is much variation in the quality of teaching. In some lessons teachers use their subject knowledge well question pupils effectively. For example, in geography teachers check that pupils have an understanding of how the river Nile was used

historically before they introduce learning about the construction of the Aswan Dam. This helps pupils achieve. In other lessons, too much information is presented at once, without checking that pupils have secured prior learning. As a result, some pupils, and in particular some pupils with SEND, do not achieve as well as they should. The lack of consistency in checking pupils' understanding through well considered assessment approaches also leaves some pupils with gaps in their knowledge.

The school has robust procedures to ensure that every pupil is well supported to get to school. Pupils attend well. Pupils show positive attitudes to their education and value the importance of learning. The school's approach to supporting pupils who struggle to meet the high expectations is a strength.

Pupils' emotional and social needs are accurately identified and well met. Some pupils with these additional needs are supported to continue their education in the school's 'inclusion hub'. This helps them re-integrate quickly back into their regular classes.

There are some opportunities to develop pupils more broadly. For example, Year 4 pupils have visited a science museum and taken part in a clarinet concert. Pupils learn about world events in weekly assemblies. Year 6 are due to go on a three-day residential visit. The school is embedding the 'Harmony pledge' that helps pupils broaden their experience by, for example, being adventurous and fund raising. However, the personal development offer is not yet well established. Pupils' personal development is not yet promoted well enough.

Staff are very proud to work at this school. They know that leaders consider their workload and well-being. Those responsible for governance understand their statutory duties. The trust is committed and has a robust plan to continue to improve the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not have a firm grasp of what is the most important knowledge for some of the subjects they teach. They do not teach this precisely and as a result, pupils do not remember this knowledge well. The school must ensure that teachers focus more precisely on teaching the most important knowledge in the curriculum.

- There are occasions when teachers present too much information at once. Some pupils struggle to keep up, in particular some pupils with SEND. Consequently, they do not achieve as well as they should. The school must ensure that teachers present information more carefully and consider better adaptations for pupils with cognitive needs.
- Teachers do not consistently check that pupils have secured and remembered what they need to know for future learning. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge which are not always addressed. The school must ensure that teachers use assessment more precisely to identify and address gaps in knowledge.
- The personal development offer is not yet well embedded. Not all pupils get to hone their talents, develop new interests or consistently benefit from the school's work to help them develop a strength of character. The school must embed consistently the planned range of opportunities to develop pupils' talents, interests and character.
- Those responsible for curriculum leadership do not always have the necessary time, skills and knowledge to evaluate the quality of education. As a result, there is not always a sharp prioritisation of exactly what to improve next. The school must ensure that curriculum leaders have the knowledge and skills to improve the quality of education.

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	145759
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10298522
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	335
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew McCully
CEO	Antony Hughes
Principal	Christine Bower
Website	www.alvaston.theharmonytrust.org
Date of previous inspection	24 and 25 January 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a part of The Harmony Trust.
- The principal took up her substantive role in May 2024.
- The schools uses one registered alternative education provider.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- Inspectors held various meetings with the principal, other school leaders, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector also

met with a group of trustees, including the chair of the trust board. The lead inspector also met with a range of trust executives including the CEO and director of education.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, English, mathematics, physical geography and history. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered some other subjects: art, computing, science and religious education. They visited some lessons, spoke to subject leaders and looked at pupils' work.
- An inspector looked at pupils' education, health and care plans and other individual education plans, as well as discussing the provision for selected individuals when considering the support for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation document and development plans.
- 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.
- Inspectors took note of the responses received on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and considered the results of the staff and pupil survey. Inspectors met with pupils and parents to gather their views.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Claire Stylianides	His Majesty's Inspector
Ceri Hathaway	Ofsted Inspector

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