

Inspection of Spa Academy Askern

Sutton Road, Askern, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN6 0AQ

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Emma Anderson. This school is part of Leger 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, Adam Dale and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Babs Lynds. There is also an executive headteacher, Sarah Lathlane, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is aspirational for pupils' achievement. Leaders have reviewed the curriculum in reading and mathematics. However, there is still work to do. Standards are not high enough. Leaders have started to review curriculum plans in other subjects. This work is not complete. Leaders have not identified the most important things that pupils must know in some subjects. This means that pupils could miss vital learning that helps them in future years.

Pupils enjoy attending school. They experience a wide range of activities. Visits to interesting places, such as the Yorkshire Wildlife Park and an outdoor pursuits centre, add to what pupils learn in the curriculum. Pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of extra-curricular experiences, such as basketball club and homework club.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. There are positive relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils generally behave well. Pupils know how to raise a concern and they trust that staff will always help them. This includes on the rare occasions that bullying occurs.

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

The school has strengthened some curriculum areas. In some subjects, the school has thought carefully about what they want pupils to know and remember. In mathematics, the school has identified the important knowledge that pupils must learn. Learning builds on what pupils already know. However, in some other subjects, the important knowledge is not identified clearly. This means that pupils are not building on what they know and can do. In some lessons, teachers do not check carefully whether pupils have understood what is being taught. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge.

The school identifies pupils who have fallen behind in reading quickly. Staff provide support to pupils to help them increase their phonic knowledge as soon as they enter the school. Leaders have trained to teach reading well. Teachers make regular checks to ensure that pupils keep up. Pupils read books that contain the sounds that they know. Pupils who are confident with their reading benefit from a range of high-quality texts. This helps them to continue to develop their reading skills.

The school has planned the mathematics curriculum well. Leaders provide staff with the training they need to teach mathematics well. However, pupils do not get sufficient opportunity to solve problems and explain how they work things out. Often, pupils do not get time in lessons to tackle mathematical problems. This affects the standards they achieve. Leaders have plans in place to improve this area of mathematics.

Staff identify pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. Leaders provide effective guidance and training to help staff meet the needs of pupils with SEND. As a result of this support, pupils with SEND achieve well.

The school has worked hard to create an environment that is warm and welcoming. Clear routines ensure that pupils move around the school sensibly. Most pupils focus well on their activities. Teachers refocus pupils quickly when they do not pay attention. Pupils are keen to share their ideas with the class. They are confident when speaking with adults.

Assemblies celebrate the efforts pupils make. The school encourages pupils to respect different beliefs. Leaders are careful to promote equal opportunities. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They can talk with confidence about the importance of democracy and relate this to their own lives.

Leaders and governors are passionate about the school. They are determined to make sure it continues to improve. There is a strong team culture among the staff. Leaders provide staff with a wide range of training opportunities. Staff feel valued. They appreciate the support that they receive from leaders and the academy trust. The school has improved since the last inspection. However, there is still more to do.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, curriculum plans are not well sequenced. Leaders have not carefully considered what pupils need to learn in each subject. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Curriculum leaders should consider the precise knowledge pupils must learn, and in what order, so that pupils can successfully build on what they already know.
- In some lessons, teachers do not carefully check that pupils have learned what is intended. As a result, leaders and teachers do not always know when pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that there are systems in place to accurately identify what pupils know and remember.
- The school does not provide enough opportunity for pupils to study all areas of mathematics. Pupils do not develop strategies for solving problems. Leaders should ensure that teachers receive further training and support to teach problem-solving strategies.

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	146998
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10290354
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	242
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Babs Lynds
Headteacher	Emma Anderson
Website	spaacademyaskern.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Spa Academy Askern converted to be an academy in June 2019. When its predecessor school, Askern Spa Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- There have been significant changes to staffing since the last inspection. There is a new leadership team in place, including an Executive Headteacher.

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.

- 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 met with the headteacher, senior leaders, groups of staff, groups of pupils and representatives of the academy trust.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, physical education and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- The inspectors listened to some pupils reading to an adult.
- 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.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, as well as the responses to staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including safeguarding records and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Jaimie Holbrook, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Angela Harper

Ofsted Inspector

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