

Spa Academy Askern

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

Unique reference number (URN): 146998

Inspection report: 2 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ●
Needs attention	● ● ●
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have put the personal development and wellbeing of pupils at the heart of the school's work. Leaders have a deep understanding of each pupil and what their needs, interests and talents are. Pastoral care for all pupils is central to this. Pupils are supported in different aspects of their lives, including healthy eating, the importance of sleep and friendships. While there is a programme planned for this, leaders are also flexible and responsive to the emerging needs of the pupils and the community. There is also individual support for pupils who need it.

There is a comprehensive curriculum to support pupils' personal development. This is well tailored to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils have an impressive understanding of healthy relationships. Pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and protected characteristics is equally well developed. They have a strong sense of self and empathy for each other. Pupils are confident, respectful and articulate. They know how to keep themselves and others safe, both online and offline. Leaders have prioritised safety lessons which are particularly relevant to the area, such as water safety. Pupils are very well prepared for life beyond primary school.

The school provides an extensive range of opportunities to support pupils' personal development and wider experiences. Pupils benefit from a variety of clubs and enrichment activities, which are informed, in part, by pupil voice. These change every half term, and leaders meticulously track the participation, to ensure an equal offer for all, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. High proportions of these pupils gain a great deal from attending these clubs.

Displays around the school celebrate a range of awards and achievements, contributing to a positive culture of recognition and aspiration. Pupils are proud of these achievements. Leadership opportunities, including reading ambassadors and academy ambassadors, enable pupils to take on responsibility and contribute to school life.

Expected standard ●

Inclusion

Expected standard ●

Leaders demonstrate a clear commitment to supporting vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged. Leaders have established increasingly robust processes for the identification of pupils who may have additional needs. There is a proactive approach to securing additional and specialist support for pupils who need it. This includes the use of alternative provision where required. Leaders prioritise appropriate training for staff so they can meet a wide range of needs.

The provision for pupils with the highest levels of need is a particular strength. Pupils benefit from bespoke support, carefully adapted learning and the effective use of resources to help

them learn. Staff model learning clearly and check pupils' understanding regularly.

In lessons, teachers use a range of methods to support pupils with SEND. This includes the use of additional adults, different materials and adjusted work. Where more targeted work is needed for pupils to catch up, this is implemented effectively. Pupils with SEND progress well from their different starting points.

The additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is strategically planned and uses research to best meet pupils' needs.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders' well-judged actions have brought about some notable improvements to this school. They have established a clear and ambitious vision and have taken the time to get to know the community in which they serve. Leaders understand the school's strengths and identify precisely the areas that require further development. These areas have been prioritised and actions are implemented with tenacity and purpose. Leaders evaluate their work regularly and refine their approaches when needed.

Leaders keep the best interests of the pupils central to their work. They want pupils to feel cherished while at school. Leaders are resolute in their commitment to ensuring that all pupils, regardless of their starting points or any barriers to learning, are supported to achieve well and develop confidently across all areas of school life.

The school is effectively supported by the local governing board and the trust. This has strengthened the leadership capacity and enabled the recent improvement. Governors and trust staff have maintained a balance of support and challenge to the leadership team. They have also ensured that all statutory duties are fulfilled. The introduction of robust systems and processes has been instrumental in making good progress in its improvement journey. Leaders have engaged with other schools within the trust to ensure secure transitions both in and out of the school are strengthened.

Leaders have prioritised staff training at all levels. Staff feel very well supported in their work and feel that their workload is manageable.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Pupils' achievement across school is variable.

While notable improvements have been made recently, pupils' outcomes at the end of key 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are not high enough over time. This means that pupils are not as well prepared as they could be for their next steps in their education. Disadvantaged pupils' outcomes are improving, with the gap between their non-disadvantaged peers narrowing in mathematics and reading.

The systematic and rigorous approach leaders have taken to the teaching of multiplication tables has had a positive impact. In these measures, pupils are now consistently achieving above national averages in the year 4 multiplication check.

Pupils in some year groups are not closing gaps in their foundational knowledge quickly enough. This limits the extent to which they develop secure knowledge and skills across the wider curriculum.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention ●

Over time, pupils' attendance has not been high enough. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders have recently improved their systems to manage attendance. They have an accurate understanding of the barriers pupils face and work increasingly effectively with families to improve attendance. Leaders have also prioritised making school a place where the pupils want to be by introducing a range of rewards and incentives to promote high attendance. Pupils speak positively of these. There has been an improvement in attendance this year. The proportion of pupils, including those with SEND, who are persistently absent is falling. However, attendance remains below the national averages.

Pupils respond admirably to leaders' high expectations around behaviour. This is reflected in their mature conduct around school. Pupils behave respectfully, with positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils mix well and play energetically at playtimes. Any incidents of poor behaviour are managed well. Bullying is uncommon and dealt with appropriately. Pupils with additional needs receive the help they need to manage their emotions and conduct. Over time, pupils rely less on this support as they become more confident and independent in managing their behaviour.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention ●

Leaders have significantly developed the curriculum. They have high ambitions for a well-sequenced and coherent curriculum and plans in place reflect this. Leaders have worked with the feeder schools to develop a progressive curriculum across the school in all subjects. Work in books highlights pupils' regular opportunities to revisit prior learning. This helps pupils remember important concepts in the long term.

However, there are inconsistencies in the implementation of leaders' expectations and the curriculum across classrooms. This is particularly evident in pupils' foundational skills and knowledge. Variability exists in how staff support pupils with their writing, number formation and pencil grip. While examples of effective practice are evident, these are not yet sufficiently widespread to ensure that pupils develop secure and consistent foundational skills across all classes.

Similarly, assessment of pupils' work is not always effective in helping to identify gaps or moving learning on. At times, work is assessed incorrectly or pupils make recurring errors without adults addressing them. This means that mistakes are being reinforced and pupils' progress is not as strong as it might be.

Leaders acknowledge that there is more to do, particularly in the teaching of handwriting and spelling, and they have begun to act. However, this is at an early stage and too soon to see an impact.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils who attend Spa Academy Askern are happy, settled and feel safe. They are proud of their school and of the achievements they make, both in school and while representing the school at various events. There are many leadership opportunities, which promote pupils' confidence. There are a range of clubs to engage and inspire pupils. Leaders actively seek the views of the pupils to ensure there is something for everyone.

Pupils benefit from a well-sequenced curriculum and a wide range of extra opportunities. Many pupils make positive progress from their starting points. Leaders are working to strengthen this achievement as pupils move through school. Pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit fully from life at the school.

Pupils receive a warm welcome from staff as they arrive at school each morning. There are adjustments to the start time and pastoral support for those pupils who need it to help encourage attendance. Clear routines and expectations help support pupils' transition into school. Pupils benefit from a caring, dedicated team of staff who care deeply about them and strive to provide a warm and nurturing school environment where everyone thrives. Many pupils attend school regularly, but some do not. Attendance is a whole-school priority and is improving.

There is a real sense of belonging at the school. Leaders have worked hard to instil this in the pupils, and it is evident when walking around the building. Pupils are polite and respectful to one another and to all adults in the school. Behaviour is calm and harmonious around school. Lessons are focused and purposeful. Pupils say that bullying does happen sometimes, but the adults deal with it quickly. Pupils are aware of the behaviour expectations and say that adults are fair and consistent when applying the behaviour policy.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that all staff teach the curriculum consistently and effectively so that pupils build foundational skills and knowledge across all subjects.
 - Leaders should continue to work on improvement strategies so that all pupils achieve as high as they possibly can, across the curriculum, before leaving the school.
 - Leaders should embed their work to increase pupils' attendance to ensure that improvements are sustained over time.
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About this inspection

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 (CEO), Adam Dale, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nicola Bailey. There is an executive headteacher, Sarah Lathlane.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders during the inspection, including from the trust. They also met with the CEO, chair of the trust board and members of the local governing board. Inspectors spoke with some pupils, staff and parents and carers.

The school currently makes use of 3 alternative provisions, including 1 that is unregistered.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. This includes the appointment of a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator. There is also a new chair of the trust and the local governing body.

Headteacher: Kathryn Housley

Lead inspector:

Lorraine Bamforth, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Liam Colclough, Ofsted Inspector

Rimah Aasim, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.



This data is from 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

239

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

390

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

49.79%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.26%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

22.18%
Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	49%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	61%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	48%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	39%	60%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	58%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	69%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	54%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	54%	73%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	61%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	58%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	70%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	52%	73%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	36%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	48%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	31%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	29%	44%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	45%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	56%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	50%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	50%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	48%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	61%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	51%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	59%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	47%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	46%	59%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	36%	68%	-32 pp
2024/25 (final)	48%	69%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	31%	67%	-36 pp
2022/23 (final)	29%	66%	-38 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	45%	80%	-35 pp
2024/25 (final)	56%	81%	-25 pp
2023/24 (final)	30%	80%	-50 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	50%	78%	-28 pp
2024/25 (final)	48%	78%	-30 pp
2023/24 (final)	41%	78%	-36 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	61%	77%	-17 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	51%	80%	-29 pp
2024/25 (final)	59%	81%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	47%	79%	-33 pp
2022/23 (final)	46%	79%	-33 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	8.3%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	8.5%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.9%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	27.2%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	27.7%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	29.8%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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