

Inspection of Wath Academy

Sandygate, Wath-on-Deerne, Rotherham S63 7NW

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils learn to have the highest expectations of success at this inclusive school. They aim to achieve standards of high aspirations, act with integrity and adopt a positive mindset in all they do.

Pupils are reminded of these standards in all aspects of school life, including throughout the sixth form. Pupils say they enjoy lessons and feel challenged and supported by teachers. They make excellent progress in most subjects and achieve well. They behave in a calm and orderly manner and are attentive in lessons.

Pupils enjoy exceptional development opportunities that extend learning beyond the classroom. They learn many different life skills to help prepare them for the wider world. Pupils learn how to debate through a structured programme and build oracy skills as they progress through school. There is an extensive careers programme to ensure pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education or employment.

Pupils are happy and safe. They have trusted adults that they can talk to if something is worrying them. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and about local dangers such as those found at Manvers Lake.

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

Leaders have made huge strides in improving the quality of education in recent years. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. The curriculum is designed to raise aspirations and ensure that pupils achieve qualifications that unlock future opportunities. Pupils make excellent progress in most subjects and leaders are relentless in their drive to continually improve the curriculum. The school is well on the way towards providing an exceptional quality of education for its pupils.

Teachers are well trained and enthusiastic, and they reflect on how to improve their practice. They use a variety of teaching strategies to help pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn new content. In a minority of subjects at key stage 3 and key stage 4, assessment is not consistently used to identify precisely how pupils are to improve. Where this happens, teachers do not always act on assessment to ensure that pupils are clear on their next steps. This has an impact on pupils' success in building and remembering more knowledge over time.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Leaders use carefully researched strategies to support pupils who are at the early stages of reading. A culture of reading is celebrated through teacher 'reading champions'. This helps to ensure that reading is embedded throughout the curriculum. Staff are trained in reading strategies and act as role models to pupils by talking about books that they enjoy reading.

The school has very high expectations for pupil behaviour. Pupils behave very well in and outside of lessons. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the

school. Pupils attend lessons regularly and are attentive in class. Instances of bullying and misbehaviour are rare and are quickly dealt with by staff. Pupils who have complex emotional needs receive individual and tailored support.

Pupils receive an outstanding programme of personal development. They are taught life skills that prepare them well for the outside world. For example, they learn about relationships, finances, mental health and fundamental British values. They learn to debate controversial issues that involve morality and diversity and provide balanced arguments. Pupils are well educated about careers through discovery days, visits to universities and through 'career of the week' activities in tutor time. Pupils benefit from a very large number of clubs and activities that they can take part in.

Students in the sixth form are unanimous in their positive view of the school. They are keen, ambitious, articulate and enthusiastic about their studies. They benefit from a wide range of academic and vocational courses that are well taught by expert teachers. Beyond lessons, there is an extensive range of experiences available, including a medics club, sporting activities, scholarship programmes, visiting speakers, work experience and additional study programmes. Students take up leadership positions and act as coaches or mentors to younger pupils. Students in the sixth form achieve excellent outcomes and are very well supported to progress to the next stage of their education or employment.

Leadership of the school is exceptional. Staff feel very well supported. They say that their well-being is a priority. Governors and trustees provide the vision and expertise that help the school to improve. They are actively involved in the life of the school and regularly visit the school to ensure they have a good understanding of school performance. They provide regular challenge to school leaders and are driven to improve the life chances of young people in the community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. The school places pupils' welfare at the heart of everything it does. Staff are well trained and know how to deal with any issues when they arise.

Vulnerable pupils are quickly identified. Their welfare is frequently reviewed by a panel of leaders from across the school. Where pupils need additional help, the school acts swiftly and involves other agencies where needed. The school is tenacious in following up issues.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, both in the local environment and online. Pupils feel safe at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Across a minority of subjects, there is some inconsistency in the use of assessments to effectively help pupils learn and remember more. There is variability in the clarity and precision of feedback provided to pupils about how to improve. Leaders should ensure that assessment is consistently used to identify component knowledge that is missing and that this information is then fed back to pupils and acted on. This will help all pupils to progress through the curriculum, knowing more and remembering more.

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	145848
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10267823
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1972
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	392
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julie Kenny
Principal	Liam Ransome
Website	www.wathacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this school

- The school has been part of the Maltby Learning Trust since April 2019.
- The school was formerly known as Wath Comprehensive School. The most recent full inspection of the predecessor school took place in March 2017.
- The principal has been in post for three years.
- The school uses three registered alternative provisions and four unregistered alternative provisions.
- 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, other leaders, staff and pupils. They met with leaders from Maltby Learning Trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, geography, history and English. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited lessons and looked at pupils' work in other subjects. They visited the school's provision for SEND pupils, and observed reading interventions and tutor time. They observed pupils at various times of the school day.
- Inspectors spoke to representatives of a sample of the alternative provisions used by the school.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders responsible for sixth-form provision and spoke to pupils in the sixth form.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector held meetings with members of the local governing body, trustees and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions during the inspection and through the Ofsted surveys.

Inspection team

Chris Carr, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gordon Watts	Ofsted Inspector
Lynette Edwards	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Cole	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Hubbard	Ofsted Inspector

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