

# David Nieper Academy

Grange Street, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 7JA

## Inspection dates

21 to 22 May 2019

| Overall effectiveness                        | Requires improvement     |
|--|--------------------------|
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | Requires improvement     |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement     |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | Requires improvement     |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | Requires improvement     |
| 16 to 19 study programmes                    | Requires improvement     |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the school opened in September 2016, leaders have not ensured that pupils make consistently good progress.
- At times, leaders do not judge the impact of their actions accurately enough to inform their next steps for school improvement.
- Some middle leaders have not acted quickly enough to improve their respective areas of responsibility.
- Despite strengths in some subjects, the quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school.
- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Teachers do not routinely challenge pupils, provide them with opportunities to take responsibility for their learning or to practise their skills.
- Standards, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are improving but are not yet good. Pupils' progress across different subjects is inconsistent.
- Leaders have raised their expectations for behaviour. These expectations, however, are not consistently met by some pupils.
- Although improving, pupils' attendance, especially for pupils with SEND, is still below average.
- The sixth-form curriculum is in its infancy and is not fully developed. Students' progress is not yet consistently good.
- Although trustees and members of the governing body are committed to improving the school, they do not measure the impact of leaders' actions methodically enough to ensure that pupils' progress is improved.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has worked tirelessly to improve the school. The impact of leaders' actions is evident in some of the school's work.
- Leaders have taken positive action to ensure that pupils study a broad range of subjects. Careers advice is comprehensive and supports pupils' future decisions well.
- The personal development and welfare of pupils is a strong feature of the school. Pupils are safe and cared for well.
- Leaders have worked with determination to engage parents and carers. Parents are positive about the school's work and the improvements made.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the leadership and management of the school by ensuring that:
  - governors and leaders, at all levels, increase the rigour and accuracy of the monitoring and evaluation of the school’s effectiveness in improving pupils’ progress
  - senior leaders provide middle leaders, especially those who are new to their roles, with more opportunities to develop their leadership skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that all pupils make consistently strong progress across the school, by ensuring that:
  - the most effective teaching practices are shared and implemented across all subject teams
  - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and that they challenge pupils and provide them with opportunities to apply their learning.
- Improve the sixth form by ensuring that:
  - the quality of teaching is consistently high in order to enable students to make strong progress
  - the full range of qualifications are suitably matched to students’ abilities and relevant to their career aims.
- Improve pupils’ attendance across the school, especially for pupils with SEND and for sixth-form students.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Although the headteacher has worked diligently to improve the school, consistently good outcomes for pupils have not yet been secured. A significant number of staffing changes, including in leadership at all levels, have undoubtedly slowed the pace of improvement. There have been some successes, such as the reduced number of pupil exclusions and increased parental engagement. The quality of teaching, however, is too variable and does not promote consistently strong pupils' progress.
- School improvement planning is not monitored or evaluated well enough. Leaders are determined and committed to improving the school and they know what action to take. At times, however, the information that leaders produce can lead to confusion. For instance, pupils' progress is not routinely compared with national benchmarks. Some judgements, made about the school's effectiveness, are, therefore, over-generous. Leaders do not refine their actions sharply enough and target their next steps. As many leaders are new, some actions, implemented to rectify the identified weaknesses, are not yet embedded.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic, but their contribution to school improvement is not consistent across all subjects. Some subject leaders are new to their role. They are still developing the necessary skills to improve the quality of teaching and to strengthen pupils' progress in their respective areas. Middle leaders' views, on what is making a positive difference to improving pupils' progress, are, at times, too generous.
- Leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching have not been robust enough to ensure that all pupils achieve well. Pupils' learning experiences are, therefore, too variable. Staff are proud to work at the school. Senior leaders' ambitions are not, however, shared by all staff. Newly qualified teachers appreciate the support that leaders provide. They are developing the skills and knowledge required to become effective practitioners.
- Leaders have set more ambitious targets for some pupils than for others. They gather assessment information regularly, but there is some inconsistency in the reliability of the information collected. Leaders are, therefore, unable to make best use of this information to intervene when pupils fall behind. They have adjusted the school's assessment process, but it has not had sufficient time to know how reliable or accurate it will be.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum that provides pupils with an opportunity to study a range of subjects. Not all initiatives have filtered into the curriculum offer yet. Leaders are clear about their plans to increase the proportion of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate subjects. However, this is well below the government's ambition. A small number of pupils follow an alternative curriculum that is appropriate to their needs.
- The school's work with other providers, to consider the most effective teaching practices, is developing. Leaders and teachers engage in professional development activities, including subject networks. Leaders recognise that providing more opportunities to share good practice will strengthen the approaches used to improve

pupils' progress.

- The support that pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils receive is improving. Teachers do not, however, routinely plan to meet the needs of these pupils. The impact of leaders' actions to improve outcomes for these pupils is, at times, exaggerated. This is because leaders make comparisons with other pupils in the school and not with pupils nationally.
- Leaders use the Year 7 catch-up funding effectively to provide pupils with individualised support. Most pupils make good progress to catch up with their peers in reading and in mathematics. This is, typically, sustained as they move through Year 8.
- Pupils benefit from a strong personal, social, health and citizenship programme of study. This plays an important role in contributing to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the school is inclusive and meets the needs of the community it serves. They have been very effective in engaging parents in their children's learning. Leaders make every effort to involve parents in the life of the school. Parents speak well about the school. Pupil admissions to the school have increased notably.

### **Governance of the school**

- Trustees and governors are ambitious for the school. They have a firm understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors challenge leaders where they have concerns, but this has not yet led to enough improvement in some areas of the school's work.
- The school's procedures, used to check and report on the school's effectiveness, are not as thorough as they could be. The headteacher's report is a comprehensive document about the school's work as a whole. However, the school improvement plan and information relating to pupils' progress are not pursued with as much rigour as they could be to ensure that pupils' outcomes improve.
- Trustees and governors check on how the extra funding for pupil premium, catch up, and pupils with SEND is being used. The information leaders present, however, does not provide governors with an accurate view of how leaders are improving pupils' outcomes.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, including for those pupils who attend alternative provisions. Relevant employment checks are carried out on all staff who work at the school.
- The designated safeguarding leaders thoroughly implement all procedures to keep pupils safe. Records are detailed and well maintained. Staff and governors are trained effectively. Staff understand the systems to report concerns, including those associated with radicalisation and extremism. Partnership working with parents and external agencies is effective in helping pupils to keep safe.

- The curriculum contributes well to raising pupils' awareness of safe practices, such as social media and drugs awareness. Groups of pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in the school. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey agreed that their children are safe.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Requires improvement**

- Although there is some very effective teaching, it is not consistently good across different subjects or, at times, within subjects. Pupils' progress is, therefore, variable across the school.
- At times, teachers' expectations as to what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Sometimes, pupils' work is left incomplete or poor-quality work is accepted without challenge. In some lessons, learning is not planned well enough to match the needs of pupils. In other lessons, teachers set high expectations and plan learning activities well. In English, for instance, teachers' high expectations were reached by pupils as they analysed the technical structure of a text.
- Some pupils are not engaged well enough in their learning. Although teachers have strong subject knowledge, they do not routinely use this to plan interesting activities. On occasion, pupils lose interest and do not develop a secure understanding of key concepts or skills. Teaching is effective when relationships are strong and teachers make activities interesting. For example, pupils' understanding of Judaism and Christianity was successfully strengthened because they discussed their learning with interest and respect.
- Sometimes, teachers do not set activities that encourage pupils to learn for themselves. Similarly, they do not allow pupils time to apply their knowledge or practise their skills. Opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding and increase their knowledge are not routinely built in to learning experiences. The support provided to pupils who need extra help has improved. Teaching assistants are not, however, used as effectively as they could be to precisely meet individual pupils' learning needs.
- Teachers do not consistently adhere to the school's assessment and feedback policy. In some subjects, pupils do not receive guidance from teachers to help them improve their work. In other subjects, however, pupils receive valuable feedback from their teachers and use it wisely to deepen their understanding. This was seen to be most effective in English and in history.
- Teaching in English is consistently strong. Pupils typically enjoy their English lessons. They know that these lessons are well planned and activities are clearly linked to their learning. In English, teachers have higher aspirations for, and expectations of, pupils than in other subjects.

### Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

#### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Many pupils are confident learners and a large majority say that they enjoy their learning. Relationships between adults and pupils are typically strong. Pupils are taught

well how to keep themselves safe within school and in the community. They told inspectors that they felt safe in school. Pupils who attend alternative placements are also helped to stay safe.

- Pupils look smart and wear their uniforms with pride. They are polite, welcoming and show respect towards each other and to visitors. Many pupils care about their work, but the presentation of work in their books is variable.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school. Leaders have developed a well-planned programme of assemblies, lessons and talks to help pupils reflect on their contribution to British society. For example, pupils learn about democracy, immigration and prejudicial behaviour.
- Extra-curricular activities such as a textiles club, a music club and the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards scheme help pupils to develop a range of skills. Pupils are also encouraged to be physically active by participating in sporting activities.
- Leaders' work to prevent bullying is effective. Pupils said that bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively by staff when it does occur. Most parents agreed with this view.
- Careers advice and guidance to pupils is comprehensive. Pupils hear from independent experts about further education, apprenticeships and career opportunities. Leaders ensure that care is taken when pupils move on to the next stage in their learning. In 2018, almost all pupils sustained learning in education, employment or training.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are not consistently positive. Leaders have raised expectations for pupils' good behaviour, but some pupils still interrupt learning with off-task behaviour. When challenged by teachers, a few pupils do not respond well enough to requests made to modify their poor behaviour. This impedes pupils' progress, including the progress of other pupils in the group. Pupils say that this type of behaviour is worse in some subjects, such as in science. Where teaching is of a high quality, pupils' behaviour and conduct is exemplary. This has a beneficial impact on the progress pupils make.
- Pupils are sociable and generally get on well together. They typically behave well at social times. However, inspectors saw some boisterous behaviour around the school.
- The school's behaviour records indicate that incidents of poor behaviour have reduced over time. This is especially true for the number of fixed-term exclusions from school. However, a high proportion of pupils are placed in the school's internal exclusion room. Although leaders are working on strategies to improve pupils' behaviour further, the improvements made to reduce the number of internal exclusions has slowed down.
- Leaders have worked hard to raise pupils' attendance rates, which have improved but remain below average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, in particular, is poor. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has also reduced, but this also remains well above the national average. The attendance of pupils at alternative provisions is closely monitored.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress since the academy opened, in September 2016, has been below average. Current pupils' learning shows that they are now making stronger progress across a range of subjects. This is especially true in key stage 3.
- Assessment information, provided by the school, shows that more pupils are reaching higher standards than pupils have done in previous years. Despite this improvement, pupils' progress remains inconsistent across different subjects. Pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 are not making the progress they should.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils has been significantly below average since the academy opened. Although there are signs of improvement, especially in key stage 3, disadvantaged pupils continue to underachieve in key stage 4.
- The progress made by pupils with SEND, in the subjects they study, is improving. Their tailored provision is meeting pupils' needs more successfully in key stage 3. Different ability groups of pupils make similar progress to each other, including the most able pupils.
- The Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding is used effectively to support pupils who enter the school with levels below those typical for their age. Most pupils catch up to their peers by the end of Year 7.
- Outcomes in English are a strength of the school. Pupils have made consistently good progress since the academy opened and continue to do so. There is also a growing strength in humanities. Leaders, including middle leaders, are taking action to eliminate the variations in pupils' progress in different subjects. Their approaches, however, have not brought about some of the improvements needed.
- Leaders take great care to keep pupils in education and learning. Pupils who attend alternative provisions attend regularly and make progress because of the good support they receive.
- Strong careers advice and guidance, and subject choices at the start of key stage 4, help pupils to be well prepared for the next stages of their education or training.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Requires improvement

- The sixth-form leader is developing the provision, which opened in September 2017. At present, only 24 students attend the sixth form.
- Leaders have given due consideration to which courses they offer students, but uptake is low. Vocational courses are well chosen to meet the needs of students. Academic qualifications support Level 3 vocational courses to fill the requirements of the 16 to 19 provision. These academic qualifications are not as well matched to the students' needs or as helpful to them, in achieving their career aims, as they could be.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is typically better than elsewhere in the school. There are, however, inconsistencies similar to those in key stage 3 and key stage 4. Students are not making consistently good progress on their chosen courses.
- Students told inspectors that they enjoy their studies. They said that they were well supported in both their academic studies and personal development. This is reflected in

their high retention on the course they have chosen but not in their attendance. Low student attendance fails to ensure the continuity of learning necessary for students to make strong progress.

- Students follow appropriate personalised study programmes. These are well supported by a day-a-week work experience placement for all students. Employment skills are being well developed. Students are safe and they behave well.
- The small number of students who have not gained an appropriate GCSE pass in English and mathematics receive suitable teaching and support. They make good progress and, typically, reach higher standards.
- Leaders provide impartial careers advice and guidance, which is a strength of the sixth form provision. As yet, no student has moved on to the next stage in their education, employment or training.



## School details

|                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Unique reference number | 142405     |
| Local authority         | Derbyshire |
| Inspection number       | 10087321   |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 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 16 to 19 study programmes         | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll                   | 473  |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 24   |
| Appropriate authority                                 | Board of trustees  |
| Chair   | Christopher Nieper   |
| Headteacher   | Kathryn Hobbs  |
| Telephone number                                      | 01773 832 331  |
| Website   | <a href="http://davidnieper.academy/">http://davidnieper.academy/</a>  |
| Email address   | <a href="mailto:info@davidnieper.academy">info@davidnieper.academy</a> |
| Date of previous inspection                           | Not previously inspected   |

## Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2016 and is sponsored by the David Nieper Academy Trust. This is the only school within the academy trust. The trustees have overall responsibility for the governance of the school.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school currently uses four alternative providers: Derbyshire Out of school tuition, Derbyshire Adult Community Education, Blend Youth project; and Matlock Ritz Adult

Community Education Centre.

- The school is part of the Alfreton Nursery Teaching School Alliance.
- The school provides a breakfast club for its pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a broad range of evidence, including the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, planning and monitoring documentation, the work in pupils' books, records relating to attendance and behaviour and the school's information on pupils' current progress and attainment in all subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 35 lessons across a range of subjects. Some of this learning was observed jointly with a senior leader.
- Discussions took place with a range of staff and members of the governing body and trustees.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils from across all year groups. They also talked informally with many other pupils. The 87 pupils' responses to Ofsted's surveys were taken into account. Inspectors also listened to Year 7 pupils reading, and observed assembly and pupils' social time.
- Inspectors took into account the 41 parent responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 29 free-text comments. The school's own parental survey was also considered. The inspectors considered the 46 staff responses to Ofsted's online survey.
- The school's child protection and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised. Inspectors reviewed the school's website to confirm whether it met the requirements on the publication of specified information.

## Inspection team

|                             |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Vondra Mays, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| John Edwards                | Ofsted Inspector |
| Gill Martin                 | Ofsted Inspector |
| Ellenor Beighton            | Ofsted Inspector |

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