

Inspection of The Trafalgar School at Downton

Breamore Road, Downton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 3HN

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The Trafalgar School at Downton is truly a community school. Honest and just leadership is at the heart of this improving organisation. Senior leaders know their school and the community exceptionally well. They have utilised this to improve provision effectively following the last inspection. Consequently, the way the curriculum is taught has improved rapidly. Pupils learn the curriculum well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils value the family ethos of this school. They contribute to calm, purposeful lessons. Pupils are attentive and conduct themselves well. Many aspire to achieve and take pride in their work, particularly in subjects where teachers' expectations are highest. Pupils rightly say they feel safe. Occasionally, pupils need reminding to adhere to the school's high expectations of behaviour. Most pupils and parents rightly say that bullying is not an issue. When it does happen, leaders take appropriate action.

Pupils embrace the opportunities to enrich their learning through extensive extra-curricular opportunities, such as music, outdoor education and chess club. Pupils speak positively about the 'Trafalgar 360', which sets out 20 opportunities that all pupils will benefit from during their school life. As a result, pupils develop positive attitudes to school.

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

Leaders' work on the curriculum is rooted in the high ambition of helping pupils achieve a 'life fulfilled through empowerment'. Leaders secure this by prioritising a broad and balanced learning experience for all pupils, including those with SEND. Leaders are appropriately focused on raising expectations and improving consistency in provision. Trustees and local governors add value to leaders' work through careful and precise challenge. They look to ensure all pupils achieve as well as they can academically and holistically.

Subject leaders are supported well to plan effective sequences of learning in their subjects. They provide regular and ongoing high-quality training to help teachers strengthen their subject knowledge and be effective teachers for pupils with SEND. Consequently, teachers are skilled and know what is expected of them. They rightly feel valued as members of this ambitious learning community.

Leaders have established agreed approaches to teaching. Teachers follow these consistently and well. They utilise the strong curriculum planning to build on what pupils know and can do. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly and with precision. Teachers use questioning skilfully to ensure pupils are keeping up with what is expected of them. However, leaders rightly acknowledge that even more can now be expected. For example, pupils' learning is sometimes constrained because teachers lead discussions and limit the time spent exploring ideas. As a result, pupils remember key knowledge and achieve well across most areas of the curriculum.

However, they do not deepen their understanding by applying what they have learned in multi-disciplinary ways.

Reading is appropriately prioritised, particularly for those who are behind their peers when they start at school. Leaders assess pupils' reading as soon as they start. From this they adapt provision to meet the needs of each cohort, as well as providing targeted intervention for pupils who need to catch up with their reading. As a result, pupils keep up with their peers and are often able to reintegrate fully into their year group's learning by the time they finish Year 7.

The curriculum supports pupils' social and emotional development well. There are plentiful opportunities to explore their interests and abilities in clubs and other school events. Pupils are provided with impartial careers advice and are well supported to choose appropriate post-16 pathways. Leaders have carefully identified age-appropriate content to broaden pupils' understanding of themselves and others. This includes considering how and when pupils are taught about relationships, consent and fundamental British values. Assemblies and tutor times are utilised well to explore key themes and important issues. Consequently, pupils learn about the importance of diversity, democracy and citizenship, but also a strong sense of standing up for what they believe in.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have secured a strong safeguarding culture. The designated safeguarding lead is appropriately trained, a member of the senior leadership team and a central part of the local community. As a result, she has established processes that are highly tailored to the local context.

Leaders' training ensures that staff are very well placed to identify pupils' needs, follow up concerns well and provide targeted support. Parents and pupils recognise the strong work of staff to promote wellbeing. Leaders work together effectively to ensure that the curriculum responds to local issues and areas of specific concern.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have introduced standard expectations to improve the consistency of how the curriculum is implemented. This has successfully improved the overall quality of teaching and learning. However, the standard approach means that teachers do not allow pupils to explore ideas in different ways and across subjects. This means that pupils learn the curriculum well, but sometimes to a superficial level. Leaders should build on and strengthen the implementation of the curriculum so that pupils deepen their understanding of key concepts and outcomes continue to improve in all areas.

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	144389
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10256627
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	785
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Neil Owen
Headteacher	Jonny Cole
Website	www.trafalgarschool.com
Date of previous inspection	3 and 4 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been two changes in headteacher. The current post holder is carrying out the role in an acting capacity.
- The school uses five alternative providers. Two of these are registered and three are unregistered.
- 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.

- This was the first graded inspection since the school converted to be an academy. The previous ungraded inspection judged the school to be good. However, inspectors had some concerns that one or more areas may have been declining.
- Inspectors met with leaders including senior and middle leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. They also spoke to a range of staff.
- Inspectors met with the chief executive officer and two directors of education from Magna Learning Partnership Academy Trust. They met with four members of the local governing body, including the chair, and a Trustee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, geography and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks, talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding and checked records relating to safeguarding. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils informally.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, including free-text responses.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the leaders' evaluations, improvement plans, documents relating to the work of the trust and information about the school's curriculum.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sara Berry	His Majesty's Inspector
David Simons	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Barnes	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023