

# Inspection of Firbeck Academy

Firbeck Road, Wollaton, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG8 2FB

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Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Firbeck Academy is an inclusive school. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive and respectful. Pupils and staff are proud of their school. Leaders encourage pupils to share their ideas, care for others and be confident learners.

Leaders want pupils to 'work hard and be kind'. Pupils live up to these expectations. They understand leaders' high expectations of behaviour. Pupils behave well in lessons and during social times. They strive to earn 'Firbucks' for trying their best. Pupils understand the difference between falling out and bullying. Pupils say that if bullying does happen, leaders deal with it well. They feel safe in school.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' learning. They want all pupils to know that 'education is their passport to anywhere'. Pupils love learning. They told inspectors, 'Being at Firbeck is a great opportunity to have a great education.'

Pupils experience learning through a wide variety of opportunities beyond the classroom. Pupils enjoy looking after the allotment, where they grow their own vegetables. They learn new skills in the woodland area, such as den making. Pupils are proud to be part of the interview team when new staff are appointed.

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

Leaders are clear that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), deserve a high-quality education. Leaders have designed a curriculum that connects ambitious knowledge with rich cultural and social experiences for pupils.

Leaders have organised the curriculum knowledge into a series of engaging topics. This is sequenced well from the early years to Year 6. They have set out what knowledge they want pupils to learn and by when. In subjects such as reading and mathematics, leaders make careful checks on pupils' knowledge and understanding. They identify gaps in knowledge and help pupils to catch up. In some subjects, this is less well developed. Teachers do not know the precise knowledge that pupils have learned.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils develop a love of reading. They read a wide variety of books and enjoy opportunities to read in and out of school. The teaching of phonics begins as soon as children start in the Reception Year. Pupils' reading books match the sounds they learn. This helps them to become fluent readers. Leaders identify pupils who need extra support with reading. Staff help these pupils to catch up. Leaders select books that represent difference and diversity. This helps pupils to learn about the wider world and life beyond the local area.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start. Children happily play and learn together. There is a warm and caring atmosphere in the provision. Early years leaders have thought carefully about what children should learn. Children enjoy the exciting and well-planned activities. They are confident and curious learners.

Leaders ensure that this is an inclusive school. They identify the needs of pupils with SEND at the earliest possible stage. Leaders work with parents/carers and staff to ensure that pupils can follow the same curriculum as their peers. Staff adapt classroom activities well, to enable pupils with SEND to succeed.

Pupils conduct themselves very well in lessons and around school. As they move through key stages 1 and 2, pupils learn about how their choices might affect the rights of other people. This helps them to manage their own behaviour. Pupils play well together at playtimes. They take turns on the popular pirate ship and share equipment when playing games.

Leaders work hard to improve pupils' attendance. However, some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do not attend school often enough. These pupils are missing out on vital learning and are not achieving as well as they could.

Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to enhance their personal development. Pupils have time to reflect on their own beliefs, and on the beliefs of others, during lessons and assemblies. Pupils enjoy participating in sports. The eco-group and school council are rightly proud of their responsibilities.

Staff care about pupils and their families. They work hard to engage with parents and carers. However, there is more work to do to ensure that parents understand the improvements and changes that happen in school.

Both the trust and members of the local governing body have played an integral role in bringing about school improvements. They continue to drive improvement with great determination. They have staff workload and well-being at the forefront of their minds. Staff are proud to work at the school. They value the thoughtfulness of leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders recognise that safeguarding pupils is a priority. Leaders ensure that staff attend regular training. They monitor the well-being of pupils closely. Staff understand the importance of reporting any concerns straight away. If concerns are raised, leaders work well with a wide variety of professionals. Leaders are not afraid to challenge external agencies if they think more help is needed. Leaders and staff know pupils and their families well.

Leaders ensure they make appropriate checks on adults before they work at the school.

Pupils learn through the curriculum about issues such as online safety and their right to be safe.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Checks on pupils' learning in some foundation subjects are not as helpful as those seen in the core subjects. This means that teachers do not consistently gather the right information about what pupils have learned over time. Leaders should support staff in their use of assessment so that gaps in learning are identified and pupils are able to build on prior learning with success.
- Despite leaders' best efforts, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is too high. As a result, they miss too much learning and do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders and staff should continue to work with pupils and their families to reinforce attendance expectations and to make sure that pupils attend school regularly so that they can achieve as well as they should.
- Some parents raise concerns that leaders do not communicate with them well enough. As a result, some parents do not understand the changes and improvements in the school. Leaders need to ensure that they have effective communication with all stakeholders so that parents and carers are fully informed about school improvements and changes.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139326
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268227
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	191
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Margaret Monckton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sem Cao
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.firbeck.org.uk">www.firbeck.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Nova Education Trust.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the second 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.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the executive headteacher the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and a range of other staff. The inspector met with representatives of the local governing body and met with representatives of the trust.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding, the inspector reviewed school policies, procedures and records. The inspector met

with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke with staff, the chair of governors, the strategic lead of the trust and pupils about the school's approach to keeping pupils safe.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and religious education. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, spoke with teachers and spoke with pupils about their learning. The inspectors visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspectors met with groups of staff and pupils and considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Kirsty Norbury, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Karen Slack

Ofsted Inspector

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