Inspection of The Farnley Academy

Chapel Lane, Farnley, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS12 5EU

Inspection dates:	19 and 20 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	**Outstanding**
The quality of education	**Outstanding**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Outstanding**
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Chris Stokes. This school is part of The GORSE Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sir John Townsley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anne McAvan.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils proudly attend this aspirational and visionary school. They know that they are well supported to achieve the high expectations that the school has for them. Pupils model the school's core values of 'ambitious, resilient and kind' in everything they do. The school has a relentless focus for all pupils to achieve the very best outcomes they can. This is evident in the qualifications they achieve and the exciting next steps they move on to after leaving the school.

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. They treat others with respect and are courteous to staff and to each other. Pupils have a very strong knowledge of equality. They speak articulately about individual differences. Pupils celebrate these. All of this contributes to the calm learning environment which is consistently in place.

Pupils are happy and safe. They know they have a trusted adult who they can go to with any concerns. Pupils are confident that any adult would act swiftly to help them. The school does not tolerate bullying and discriminatory language. On the very rare occasion that there is a bullying incident, the school takes effective action.

There are many wider opportunities for pupils to extend their experiences. Many pupils attend the broad variety of extra-curricular clubs every week, which include rowing, eco-club and Farnley Files. The 'Every Child Should' programme provides all pupils with a range of 'experience days' to further broaden their horizons. Pupils go on trips, learn skills such as baking or riding a bike and learn about first aid. At the time of the inspection, pupils were excitedly looking forward to a visit to the theatre.

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

Leaders have designed a highly effective curriculum which clearly sets out the important knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to revisit prior learning. Leaders and teachers ensure the curriculum broadens pupils' experiences and their understanding. For example, pupils explore the colonialisation of West Africa to underpin their knowledge on a new unit of work. This helps pupils to remember what they have been taught before.

In lessons, teachers present information clearly. They use a range of strategies to help pupils understand important new concepts. The use of 'iterative starters' gives pupils the opportunity to recall prior learning and create links with new learning. During all lessons, there is dedicated time for pupils to assess themselves against the intended outcomes. This time is known as the 'Purple Zone'. This also allows teachers to assess pupils' understanding and provide personalised support where needed. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make rapid progress. Pupils at the school achieve exceptionally well.

Reading is prioritised by the school. Pupils have weekly reading lessons. The school has developed forensic reading which develops pupils' ability to analyse unseen texts. Their understanding of the world is broadened by the range of articles and wider texts that they read. Leaders have a sharp focus on supporting pupils who are at the early stages of reading. The needs of these pupils are quickly assessed and appropriate support is put in place. As a result, they quickly learn to read more fluently and with confidence.

The school has extremely high expectations for pupils' behaviour. These expectations are modelled by all staff. Pupils consistently meet these high standards. Their conduct creates a positive environment. Pupils in all year groups value the rewards system. They talk proudly about the Farnley Festival and how they had accessed the funfair through their excellent attitudes to school.

The school is committed to giving pupils a broad experience to enhance their personal development. Pupils benefit from a highly effective curriculum that enhances their knowledge of the wider world. Pupils speak passionately about equality, and many pupils have a deep understanding of diversity. As a result, pupils are well prepared to take their place in modern Britain.

Pupils benefit from an extensive careers programme. The school takes every opportunity to explore different careers, such as through 'job of the week'. Teachers skilfully weave information about different professions into their lessons. This helps pupils to explore a wide variety of different pathways. The school has ensured there is impartial advice available for pupils in all year groups. Pupils value the ability to be able to speak with a careers adviser whenever they would like.

Leaders, governors and the trust work in a clearly defined way. The vision and values are a constant that drives the work that they do. They commit to doing the very best for all pupils. There is a relentless focus on pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged. Staff are proud to work at The Farnley Academy. They know that leaders have their best interests at heart and consider both their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137577
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10290184
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,504
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anne McAvan
Principal	Chris Stokes
Website	www.farnley.leeds.sch.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	30 March 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The GORSE Academies Trust.
- A small number of pupils attend the trust's own alternative provision, The Stephen Longfellow Academy. The school does not make use of any other alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the

school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the principal and other senior leaders over the course of the inspection. An inspector met with the chief executive officer, members of the trust board and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, art, physical education and drama. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector listened to some pupils read.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- A range of school documents were reviewed, including the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered the views of pupils through their responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils and through meetings held with pupils.
- Inspectors considered the view of staff through meetings and their responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Andrew Gibbins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Simon Barber	Ofsted Inspector
Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector
Melanie Kane	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Hemming	Ofsted Inspector
Toni Spoors	Ofsted Inspector

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