

Inspection of Shrewsbury Academy

Corndon Crescent, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 4LL

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The acting headteacher of this school is Jim Taylor. This school is part of The Marches Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sarah Finch, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alex Fry.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff know the pupils at Shrewsbury Academy well, and there are high levels of care. Staff work hard to ensure the school realises the trust's mission of 'achievement through caring'. Pupils benefit from opportunities the school provides. There remains much to be done, however, to ensure that provision at Shrewsbury Academy realises the school's vision in full.

Recent improvements in how the school manages behaviour means that pupils benefit from better routines and a calmer learning environment. This is not yet consistent, however. Pupils do, however, report they feel safe in school.

Many pupils speak positively about the school and the place it holds in the local community, but this view is not shared by all. The school is aware that some pupils are unhappy that the rate of improvement has not been more rapid in their school.

The school has overhauled the curriculum to ensure it is ambitious for all pupils. This is in response to outcomes which the school recognises were too low for too many pupils in the past. There remain inconsistencies in the quality of education, and while some have a more positive learning experience, this is not yet the case for all pupils.

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

The school recognises that published outcomes have been too low. The curriculum is now structured so that it is ambitious, identifies the key knowledge pupils need to be successful and takes account of gaps in pupils' learning. The school has identified where refinements still need to be made, for example, following a change to examination entry policy.

Pupils learn the intended curriculum well, when learning activities match the ambition of the curriculum and take into account their previous learning. However, too often activities do not enable pupils to learn the key knowledge or checks on pupils' understanding are not careful enough. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always identified and persist. As a result, some pupils struggle to engage with their work, leading to low-level disruption in lessons. The school's work to support pupils who find reading difficult is at a very early stage and support for pupils who lack phonic knowledge has only recently been put in place.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs accurately identified. However, there are differences in how effectively teachers use information to adapt learning activities for these pupils. Furthermore, the effectiveness of additional interventions for pupils who require them varies. This affects how well these pupils learn the intended curriculum.

The school has very recently clarified expectations for pupils' behaviour. This has had a positive impact and many pupils benefit from better routines and clearer

expectations. When these expectations are not enforced or not met, there is disruption to pupils' learning or poor behaviour in social times. Many pupils concentrate well in lessons and show resilience, but this is not yet the case across the school. The school has introduced new approaches to support pupils who most struggle to meet expectations. These have yet to have the full impact intended, and there remain pupils, especially those who are vulnerable, who experience suspensions too often. The school's systemic approach to address low levels of attendance has had some positive impact. The school recognises that some parents and carers need further encouragement to ensure their children attend school regularly.

The curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education is broad and provides up-to-date information pupils need to keep themselves safe. There are some opportunities for the pupils to show leadership, take responsibility and develop citizenship. The school also offers a range of enrichment opportunities. For example, there are opportunities including the drama club, a number of sports clubs and the Duke of Edinburgh's award. Although the school does monitor the uptake of these opportunities, it does not yet use this information to maximise participation, especially for pupils who would most benefit from them.

The trust has worked extensively to support the school and to bring stability. This has included attracting staff to the school with the appropriate skills and experience. They recognise that their actions have not yet led to consistent improvements, and some changes have not been put in place as rapidly as intended. For example, ensuring that relevant staff have skills to check the consistency of improvements in their areas of responsibility. This means that inconsistencies and areas of weakness persist. Governors and trustees are committed to the school, despite the many challenges it has faced.

Many staff are proud of the school and the role it plays in the local community. They speak positively about how they are listened to, and their well-being considered, but some say that they would appreciate more clarity about their work given recent changes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's work to improve pupils' behaviour is not always understood or followed by staff. This means there is not a consistent approach to managing behaviour, and sometimes poor behaviour is not addressed appropriately. The school should ensure that all staff apply the school's approach to behaviour

management consistently, so that it leads to further improvements in pupils' behaviour.

- The school's actions to support weaker readers has been too slow. This means that too many pupils cannot read well enough for their age, limiting their access to the curriculum. The school should accelerate their reading programme, so all weaker readers have access to appropriate phonics support or reading practice, so that they can fully access the curriculum.
- The school has not ensured that all teachers check systematically what pupils know and remember. As a result, teachers do not consistently identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. The school should ensure that all teachers routinely assess how well pupils are doing in lessons and respond effectively to, so that all pupils learn well.
- Learning activities in lessons sometimes do not match the ambition of the curriculum or reflect pupils' previous knowledge. This means that pupils do not always build securely on their existing knowledge and skills. The school should ensure that learning activities match the ambition of the intended curriculum, and these are coherently delivered to build pupils' knowledge over time.
- The school has not ensured that all pupils with SEND receive effective support to achieve well. When planned adaptations for these pupils are not used as intended, they struggle to learn the intended curriculum. The school should ensure that staff use the information provided to adapt the curriculum appropriately, so these pupils learn the intended curriculum effectively.
- The school's monitoring has not had the impact that leaders intend. As a result, some development areas or recent improvements remain inconsistent. The school should ensure that the impact of improvement work at all levels is evaluated consistently to judge its effectiveness, and actions follow to ensure increased consistency.

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	147540
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10294686
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	802
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alex Fry
Acting Headteacher	Jim Taylor
Website	shrewsburyacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Shrewsbury Academy joined The Marches Trust in September 2019.
- The school uses three registered and four unregistered alternative providers.
- 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

- Inspectors met with the chief executive officer, trust representatives, trustees, governors, school leaders, teaching and other school staff. Inspectors also scrutinised minutes of trustee and governor meetings.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in: mathematics, science, geography, modern foreign languages and English. They also looked at examples of pupils' work, spoke to pupils and visited lessons in other subjects. 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.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's extra-curricular activities, enrichment programme and their careers and personal development programmes with leaders and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils, both formally and informally. Inspectors took account of responses to a staff survey, Ofsted Parent View and free-text responses.

Inspection team

Andrew Madden, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Elaine Haskins	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Epton	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Turner	Ofsted Inspector

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