

Inspection of Montsaye Academy

Greening Road, Rothwell, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN14 6BB

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Good

The principal of this school is Deb Wilson. This school is part of the Pathfinder Schools trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Emma Sims. The trust is overseen by the board of trustees, chaired by Graham Tomkins.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is failing many of its pupils, including students in the sixth form. The quality of education it provides is inadequate. Pupils significantly underachieve. Reasonable expectations around behaviour, attendance and punctuality are routinely flouted.

The arrangements for safeguarding are ineffective. The safeguarding culture is poor. Some pupils do not trust that they will receive help if they should need it. Failed procedures and delays in taking action have put some pupils at risk.

There is insufficient oversight and governance of pupils who attend alternative provision. The school has not assured that pupils who attend these provisions are safe and well educated.

The school has failed to ensure that pupils' behaviour is well managed. Some pupils are fearful during social times and in lessons. The behaviour of some pupils is very poor and goes unchallenged. Shouting and swearing between pupils is commonplace. Pupils say that bullying happens and is not dealt with effectively.

Pupils do not have a strong understanding of British values. They are not prepared well for life in modern Britain. Their knowledge of different faiths and cultures is limited. They do not understand why it is important to respect those who are different from themselves. Homophobic comments are routine. Boys sometimes use sexualised language towards girls. Some pupils experience racism.

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

The school's curriculum is poorly planned. It is not coherent and lacks ambition. It fails to ensure that pupils, including students in the sixth form, acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding they should. Pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), underachieve significantly. The curriculum is not suitably adapted to meet pupils' needs.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are too dependent on who is teaching the class. Some staff do not have the subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum in sufficient depth. Teaching strategies often focus on controlling pupils' behaviour rather than ensuring that pupils acquire the knowledge and skills they need. Disruption is widespread. Some pupils are fearful of asking questions in some lessons. Others do not ask for help to avoid drawing attention to themselves.

Information about how well pupils are doing is rarely used to good effect. Pupils' starting points are not well understood. Some pupils, including pupils with SEND, have significant gaps in their learning. These gaps are often not identified and go unresolved.

Some pupils struggle to read at a level appropriate to their age. They do not get the support they need. This limits their access to learning across the curriculum. Strategies to develop a love of reading more widely are only in the early stages of being developed.

Pupils' attendance is poor. Some pupils are often absent, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Strategies to address these issues are in the early stages of development.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are frequently late to school and to lessons. Some staff are not punctual and keep pupils waiting at the start of lessons. The systems to ensure that students in the sixth form are on site are inconsistently applied and have limited impact on attendance.

In-school truancy is high. Some pupils wander the corridors and defiantly miss lessons. Staff do not always know where these pupils are or if they are safe.

Some pupils feel unsafe when using the toilet facilities. They avoid going to the toilet, causing them significant discomfort and the risk of embarrassment.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is poorly taught. Some pupils do not learn the important knowledge they need to be well informed and safe. At times, teachers avoid tackling sensitive issues to avoid provoking poor behaviour, particularly of boys in key stage 4. Some girls say they find these lessons intimidating.

There is an appropriate careers programme in place. However, students in the sixth form do not benefit from meaningful opportunities to explore the world of work. They lack opportunities to engage in a wide range of enrichment activities. They are not as well prepared for their next steps as they should be.

The school has a legacy of inadequate governance. Governors' oversight of safeguarding and their duties in relation to equalities has been poor. The school has declined. Recent changes to trust leadership have meant that work has begun, at pace, to improve governance and increase accountability. The correct issues have been identified; however, impact is yet to be seen.

There has been a lot of change in a short amount of time. There have been significant changes to staff, including those in key leadership roles. There are large numbers of temporary staff. Current leaders have shown great commitment. Many permanent staff have shown tremendous loyalty to the school. Even so, staff are beleaguered, and leadership capacity is poor.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The school's oversight of safeguarding is weak. Some of the issues relating to safeguarding are widespread and deep rooted. Currently, leaders do not have the capacity to address the pervasive nature of these concerns.

Systems in place to keep pupils safe are inadequate. Referrals for expert help are not consistently secured in a timely way. These weaknesses leave pupils, including those who are the most vulnerable, at risk of potential harm.

The school does not complete timely welfare checks to make sure that pupils who attend alternative provisions, those who follow part-time timetables and those who work from home are safe. There is too much delay in responding to safeguarding concerns about these pupils.

Too many pupils have little confidence in the school keeping them safe. They do not believe that concerns about their safety will be taken seriously. This is sometimes the case. They do not know who to turn to for help. This is partly due to a shortage of staff in key welfare posts.

Some staff's understanding of safeguarding systems and processes is either inconsistent or incomplete. Recruitment checks for permanent staff are suitable. However, checks on temporary staff are inconsistent and are not good enough.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has been through a period of turbulence, with frequent changes to staff and to leadership responsibilities. Effective oversight of many aspects of the school has been lacking. This has meant that many strategies to improve the school have not been implemented effectively. The school, with the support of the trust, must ensure that there is a stable body of well-supported staff. It must make sure that leaders at all levels have the knowledge and skills necessary to improve the school.
- The school has not ensured that there is a strong safeguarding culture and that its safeguarding arrangements are effective. There are too many weaknesses that leave pupils potentially unsafe. Systems to report, and leaders' actions in response to, safeguarding concerns, including bullying and harassment, are not effective. Too many pupils do not trust staff to resolve their concerns. Those who are at risk of potential harm do not always get the support they need. The school must prioritise pupils' safety and well-being to ensure that it fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities.
- Safeguarding arrangements for pupils who attend off-site alternative provision are poor. There are no reassurances that these pupils are safe. The school must carry out appropriate checks before pupils attend a provision. It must ensure that there are robust systems in place to check that these pupils attend these provisions and are safe, and that they study an appropriate curriculum when there.

- The behaviour of some pupils is often poor. Strategies to manage pupils' behaviour are not consistently applied by staff. Poor behaviour is not tackled rigorously. Lessons are often disrupted, and some pupils feel intimidated during social times. Many pupils do not take the sanctions they receive seriously. The school must urgently ensure that an effective behaviour policy is applied consistently and implemented fairly so that pupils can concentrate on their learning and feel safe as they move around school.
- Systems to manage and improve pupils' attendance at school and to lessons are not effective, including in the sixth form. These systems are not responsive enough to reliably ensure pupils' safety. Pupils' absence and persistent absence are too high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. In-school truancy happens too often. The school must make sure that all pupils attend school and lessons regularly. It must check that any pupils who are absent are safe.
- The curriculum is poorly planned and implemented. Some pupils cannot recall what they have learned about the subjects they study. The school must ensure that a high-quality, ambitious curriculum is planned and implemented consistently well so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, achieve the high standards that they should.
- There is limited support for pupils who struggle to read. Many pupils cannot read well enough to access the curriculum. The school must urgently put in place a well-planned and appropriately resourced reading programme. Pupils must be supported to read accurately and fluently so that they are properly equipped to learn.
- Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are not prepared well for their next stage in education or as citizens in their communities. They have a limited understanding of diversity, British values and the protected characteristics. They do not experience the world of work. The school must ensure that all pupils experience a high-quality PSHE curriculum and wider personal development opportunities so that they are ready for life in modern Britain. Sixth-form students should also gain experience of the world of work.

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	137049
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10315477
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,086
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	116
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graham Tomkins
CEO of trust	Emma Sims
Principal	Deb Wilson
Website	www.montsaye.northants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act, 2005

Information about this school

- The principal was not in school during the inspection.
- The school is part of the Pathfinder Schools trust. The CEO of the trust took up the post in January 2023. The chair of the board of trustees is newly appointed.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers and one unregistered provider. A few pupils receive their education remotely through an online 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 inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- 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 senior leaders. The lead inspector met with the CEO, the deputy CEO, the chair of the board of trustees and members of the Pathfinder Schools trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, history, computing and science. As part of the deep dives, inspectors spoke with curriculum leaders to review the curriculum, visited lessons and considered pupils' and sixth-form students' work. They spoke with pupils, sixth-form students and teachers. They also visited the library.
- An inspector spoke with some alternative providers. He held telephone conversations with parents.
- Inspectors held a series of meetings with leaders to discuss the school's safeguarding arrangements. They spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding. They scrutinised a range of records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at different times of the school day, including the start and end of day and at lunchtime and breaktime. They visited 'reflection' on numerous occasions. They spoke with many pupils and staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through discussions and Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

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Rakesh Patel	His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Halcro

His Majesty's Inspector

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