

Inspection of The Mease Spencer Academy

Carsington Road, Hilton, Derbyshire DE65 5LX

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Julia Hart. This school is part of The Spencer 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, Paul West, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Donna Kinderman.

What is it like to attend this school?

The Mease Spencer Academy has high ambitions for each and every pupil at this rapidly growing school. The school's 'REFLECT values' of resilience, enjoyment, family, life-long learning, everybody achieving, communication and trust are the firm foundations on which the school is built.

Pupils are full of praise for their school. They list lunchtimes, lessons and learning about the story of Titanic and space as examples of the many things they enjoy. They agree that behaviour is good because everyone knows the school rules of 'ready, respectful, safe'. Kindness is the 'golden thread' that runs through the school. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and nurturing. Pupils replicate this. They show care and consideration for each other in their work and play.

The school offers an exemplary personal development programme. No stone is left unturned to provide pupils with a wealth of experiences that extend well beyond the curriculum. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for later life. They are encouraged to have healthy bodies and minds. They have opportunities to contribute to their own communities. They also develop an understanding of their responsibilities as global citizens. Extra-curricular activities help pupils to find their personal talents and interests.

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

The curriculum has been designed with care to meet the needs of all pupils. Well-crafted plans set out the knowledge and skills that pupils need to acquire over time. It is clear how prior learning helps pupils take the next step to new learning. While the school has written the curriculum from early years to Year 6 the full impact of the curriculum on what pupils know and remember cannot be fully evaluated. This is because the school has not yet admitted pupils in Year 5 and Year 6. Nevertheless, the quality of the curriculum and education is good for those who attend the school.

Staff receive high quality training. Their own subject knowledge is strong. They introduce new learning clearly. They give pupils time to practice tasks before moving on to independent work. Teachers routinely check that pupils are grasping new concepts and provide support for pupils who need more help.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. Early years staff liaise with families and pre-school settings so that the right support is in place when children start at school. In each year group staff make well-considered adaptations to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers wherever possible.

Early reading is a strength of the school. Staff receive rigorous training to expertly deliver the school's phonic programme. Pupils learn the sounds they need to read at pace. Staff keep a close eye on pupils who do not keep up. These pupils receive prompt and targeted support. The joy of reading is promoted. Books are

everywhere. The school library is an inviting space where pupils can cosy up and enjoy a book.

Pupils are taught how to manage their feelings. After lunch 'calm time' helps pupils to get ready for afternoon lessons. In the early years children are invited to provide their peers with a gentle massage. Children understand that they must ask for the consent of others before beginning. Children know they have the right to say no to this offer.

The vast majority of pupils engage well in their lessons. In geography, Year 3 pupils work with determination and skill to use atlases to locate cities in the United Kingdom. They are challenged to find the names of rivers that run through these cities. In mathematics, children in the Reception Year participate well as they learn about the composition of the number seven. Across the school there is a small number of pupils who do not demonstrate the strong attitudes to learning expected by leaders and teachers.

A large majority of parents appreciate the work of the school. They value its open door and the wide range of opportunities and experiences on offer to their children. Nevertheless, a small number of parents raise concerns about the level of the school's care for their children.

Trust leaders provide the school with the right level of support and challenge. Staff receive training and guidance from the trust 'angels'. Trust networks empower staff to fulfil their roles as experts. Governors fulfil their delegated responsibilities. They have an 'on the ground' understanding of the day-to-day life of the school. Along with the trust they effectively hold the school to account.

Staff are unanimously positive about the support they receive for their workload and well-being. They are happy in their work and are proud to be a member of staff at The Mease.

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 has not consistently considered the adaptations that need to be made to its systems and processes as pupil numbers continue to rise. This has led to some parental dissatisfaction with the actions the school has taken to address a small number of concerns raised. The school must ensure that they have effective and established systems in place that support the ever-growing size of the school.
- Due to the nature of the school, the curriculum has not yet been delivered from the Reception Year to Year 6. It is not yet clear that the curriculum is preparing

pupils well as they move from primary to secondary school. The school will need to continue to monitor the impact of the curriculum and make any necessary adjustments to ensure that pupils are well prepared for this transition point.

- A few pupils do not have consistently positive attitudes to their learning. These pupils do not fully engage in their lessons and do not routinely give of their best. The school must ensure that all pupils live up to the high expectations they have for pupils' engagement in their learning that is displayed by the vast majority of pupils.

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	147088
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10298531
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	145
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Donna Kinderman
CEO of trust	Paul West
Principal	Julia Hart
Website	www.themeaseacademy.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2019 and is part of The Spencer Academies Trust.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

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.
- The lead inspector met with the principal, vice-principal and other senior leaders. The lead inspector also held meetings to discuss the work of the school with

representatives of the trust including the chief executive officer and the chair of the board of trustees, and the chair of governors.

- To evaluate the quality of education, inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. 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. The lead inspector listened to pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 reading to a member of staff.
- 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 groups of pupils to talk about their wider experiences of the school. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and at social times.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to the staff online survey. Inspectors also took account of parents' comments submitted via the Ofsted free-text service. An inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school.

Inspection team

Caroline Poole, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lee Christopher

Ofsted Inspector

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