

Inspection of a good school: Nova Hreod Academy

Akers Way, Moredon, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 2NQ

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2022

Outcome

Nova Hreod Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Nova Hreod is a friendly and welcoming school. Leaders have high expectations of pupils. These are based on the school's four values of drive, integrity, scholarship and contribution. Pupils reflect these values in their positive attitude towards school. Most parents are supportive of the school's approach. However, a minority feel that communication from staff could be strengthened.

Pupils benefit from a calm and purposeful learning environment. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that they feel safe at school. Most have confidence in staff to resolve any concerns. There are some incidents of derogatory language used between pupils. Leaders are taking effective action to address this.

Leaders believe in providing pupils with the wider opportunities they need to contribute fully to society as adults. There are weekly inter-house competitions. Pupils enjoy these and say they give them a sense of belonging. There are opportunities for pupils to be leaders. Some choose to be global ambassadors, members of the green team or house representatives. Year 11 pupils like the responsibility of being prefects.

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

All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from a rich and ambitious curriculum. Across different subjects, there is a focus on building and developing knowledge over time. Leaders have planned this carefully. Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and use this insight to teach the curriculum effectively. There are clear, consistent routines which allow learning time to be maximised. Low-level disruption to learning is rare. However, in some subjects, pupils are not given enough opportunity to discuss or debate their learning to help them secure a deeper understanding.

Across the curriculum, teachers routinely check what pupils know and can remember. This allows them to address misconceptions and adjust what comes next. Pupils take pride in the work they produce.

Staff understand and meet the needs of pupils with SEND. The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) works with curriculum leaders to anticipate the parts of the curriculum that pupils may find difficult. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read receive specific support so that they become confident and fluent readers. Pupils are exposed to a range of rich and diverse texts through the wider reading curriculum.

Pupils move around the school site calmly and sensibly. They are respectful towards their peers, staff and visitors. During social times, they enjoy using facilities, such as the library, or engage in sporting activities on the playground.

The 'SuperNova' enrichment programme is focused on the development of pupils' character. Pupils participate in extra-curricular clubs and volunteer their time to events in the community. There are trips linked to the curriculum, such as a recent visit to Cadbury World for pupils studying business studies. Leaders ensure these opportunities are available to all pupils. There is a detailed programme of careers advice for pupils of all years. During 'Our World Week', pupils in Year 10 engage in a range of employer encounters. This helps them to consider their next steps in education or employment. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause.

Pupils enjoy a well-planned curriculum to develop their wider personal development. They learn about how to manage their finances and the basics of first aid. Pupils are taught about relationships and consent in an age-appropriate way. The wider world and themes of diversity and inclusion are explored with pupils. They learn about different cultures and religions.

The governing body and representatives from the trust work well together to support and challenge leaders. They understand the priorities for the school. Most staff feel well supported and say their well-being is an important factor in any decisions that leaders make.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure there are clear and robust systems for the safe recruitment of staff. There is regular and appropriate safeguarding training for all staff. Leaders make this relevant to the school and the wider community.

There are different ways that pupils can seek support from a trusted adult. Staff build up a detailed picture of individual pupils and the support they need. When appropriate, leaders work effectively with external agencies to secure timely help for pupils.

Pupils are made aware of safeguarding risks. For example, the curriculum includes how pupils can keep safe online. There are appropriate school-wide policies and practice in relation to harmful sexual behaviours.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, pupils do not have the opportunity to use discussion and debate to further develop their knowledge. This can lead to a surface-level understanding of topics and therefore pupils find it difficult to recall knowledge over time. Leaders should ensure that there are opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to discuss and debate the subject content they are learning.
- A minority of parents feel that staff do not always communicate clearly with them about the school's expectations and the next steps for their child. This can sometimes lead to the relationship between school and home being weakened. Leaders should ensure that all parents and pupils receive regular and timely communication to allow them to support the school effectively.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2017.

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

Unique reference number	140515
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10226921
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	983
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dame Yasmin Bevan
Headteacher	Nick Wells
Website	http://www.novahreodacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January and 1 February 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first 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.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the SENDCo, curriculum leaders, the regional director of the trust and the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at

curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to consider how well the school identifies pupils who are at risk and engages with external services. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey and responses to the survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Kelly Olive, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Steve Taylor

Ofsted Inspector

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