

Inspection of Demetae Academy

Linden House, 17a King Street, Newcastle Under Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 1JF

Inspection dates: 10 to 12 May 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this school. They thrive in the calm and caring atmosphere created by staff. Staff have a range of expertise in teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This enables staff to provide all pupils with the support they need. Pupils settle quickly at the school because their individual needs are well met.

Pupils trust staff. They say the school is like a family, with adults they can turn to with any worries. Relationships between pupils and staff are highly positive. Pupils are confident that if there were any incidents of bullying, these would be quickly sorted out by staff.

Teachers support pupils to behave well. Leaders have established clear rules (the diamond six) that pupils know and understand. Staff use a range of strategies so that pupils who occasionally struggle with their behaviour return to learning as soon as possible.

The curriculum provides a range of opportunities for pupils to follow their interests. Integral to the whole curriculum are 'forest school' lessons. These activities help to embed learning from a range of subjects. They promote pupils' understanding of nature and the environment.

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

Since opening the school, leaders have created a strong, united team. All staff are deeply dedicated and want to make a positive difference for each individual pupil. Leaders are ambitious about what pupils can and should achieve.

Senior leaders have worked hard to create a unique, supportive and caring environment for pupils. The early years classroom is bright and stimulating. Effective assessment ensures children get off to a flying start.

Leaders have planned a broad curriculum with the specific needs of pupils in mind. There is a strong focus on pupils becoming literate and numerate. Alongside this, forest school activities see pupils studying 'live hedgehogs' and 'live snails'. These outdoor activities are carefully planned to deliver numerous subjects in a creative and engaging way. Pupils value these experiences. However, some aspects of curriculum development and training are not as well considered because of the disruption caused by COVID-19. Leaders have appropriate development plans in place to strengthen the wider curriculum.

Staff place great value on developing a love of reading in pupils. Many pupils, prior to attending this school, were anxious about reading. Staff build pupils' skills and confidence so that most learn to read with good fluency and understanding. Staff have a range of expertise in teaching pupils to read. The school's new scheme for teaching phonics is not yet fully embedded throughout the school. English lessons

use high-quality texts such as 'The Very Greedy Bee' and 'Stig of the Dump' to develop high-quality reading.

In lessons, pupils generally behave well and focus on their learning. Small classes and high levels of supervision help pre-empt any potential behaviour issues. Pupils play well together in imaginative ways. Pupils want to come to school. Attendance is high.

Personal development is at the heart of everything the school does. Leaders care deeply about pupils and are working to develop the confidence and skills needed for their futures. Teachers ensure that relationships and sex education and health education follow the government's guidance. Staff teach this effectively in an age-appropriate way. Leaders encourage pupils to have respect for the protected characteristics. For example, pupils learn about famous role models from different ethnic backgrounds who have been 'game changers' in society. This helps pupils develop their understanding of important issues such as diversity and respect.

The provision for pupils with SEND is a strength of the school. Leaders take the time to get to know their pupils well. They work closely with families and external agencies to make sure that those pupils who need support receive it. Moreover, they are making use of other professionals to develop their own practice. This is building staff's understanding of pupils and how best to support them.

The proprietor is knowledgeable and knows the school's strengths and areas for development well. The independent school standards are met in full. Leaders are determined to ensure pupils grow in confidence and achieve as well as they can. Leaders ensure the school complies with the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Staff enjoy working at the school and feel valued. Leaders are considerate of their workload and mindful of their well-being. Parents and carers who responded to the survey praise the school. They are pleased with the social and emotional progress their children have made since joining Demetae.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's safeguarding policy, which is available to parents, is published on the school's website and reflects the most recent government guidance.

Keeping pupils safe is at the core of the school's work. The curriculum provides frequent, planned opportunities for pupils to discuss issues such as healthy relationships, road safety and online safety.

Leaders ensure all staff are well trained in how to identify and report concerns. Record-keeping shows concerns are carefully documented and appropriately

followed up on. Leaders make all the necessary checks on staff before they begin working at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, the curriculum does not build seamlessly through from the early years to the end of key stage 2. This is because leaders have not determined all of the key knowledge that pupils need to know. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. Leaders need to:
 - ensure that the curriculum in all subjects sets out, and sequences appropriately, key content so that pupils can build on their previous knowledge
 - ensure that all staff receive appropriate support to help them strengthen their curriculum delivery in those subjects that are less well developed
 - ensure that all staff are confident and skilled in teaching the school's new phonics scheme
 - monitor the impact of the changes made to the curriculum.

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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	148598
DfE registration number	860/6086
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10220461
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Matthew Davies
Headteacher	Matthew Davies
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,400 to £8,850
Telephone number	01782 893079
Website	www.demetaeacademy.org.uk
Email address	headteacher@demetaeacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened on 1 September 2021 with five pupils. The number of pupils on roll has grown to 13.
- The school does not have a religious ethos.
- The school caters for pupils from Reception to Year 4. A Year 5/6 class will open from September 2022.
- Additional staff have been employed since the school opened. This includes an assistant headteacher who teaches part time in the Year 3/4 class. She is also the school's SEND coordinator.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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 leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the proprietor, who is the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and geography. Inspectors also looked in-depth at the school's science curriculum. They visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and met with staff and pupils to discuss learning.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. They also considered responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors toured the school site. They scrutinised a wide range of evidence to check on the statutory requirements for the independent school standards. This included checking the school's admissions register, risk assessments, attendance information and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Heather Phillips, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alexander Laney

Her Majesty's Inspector

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