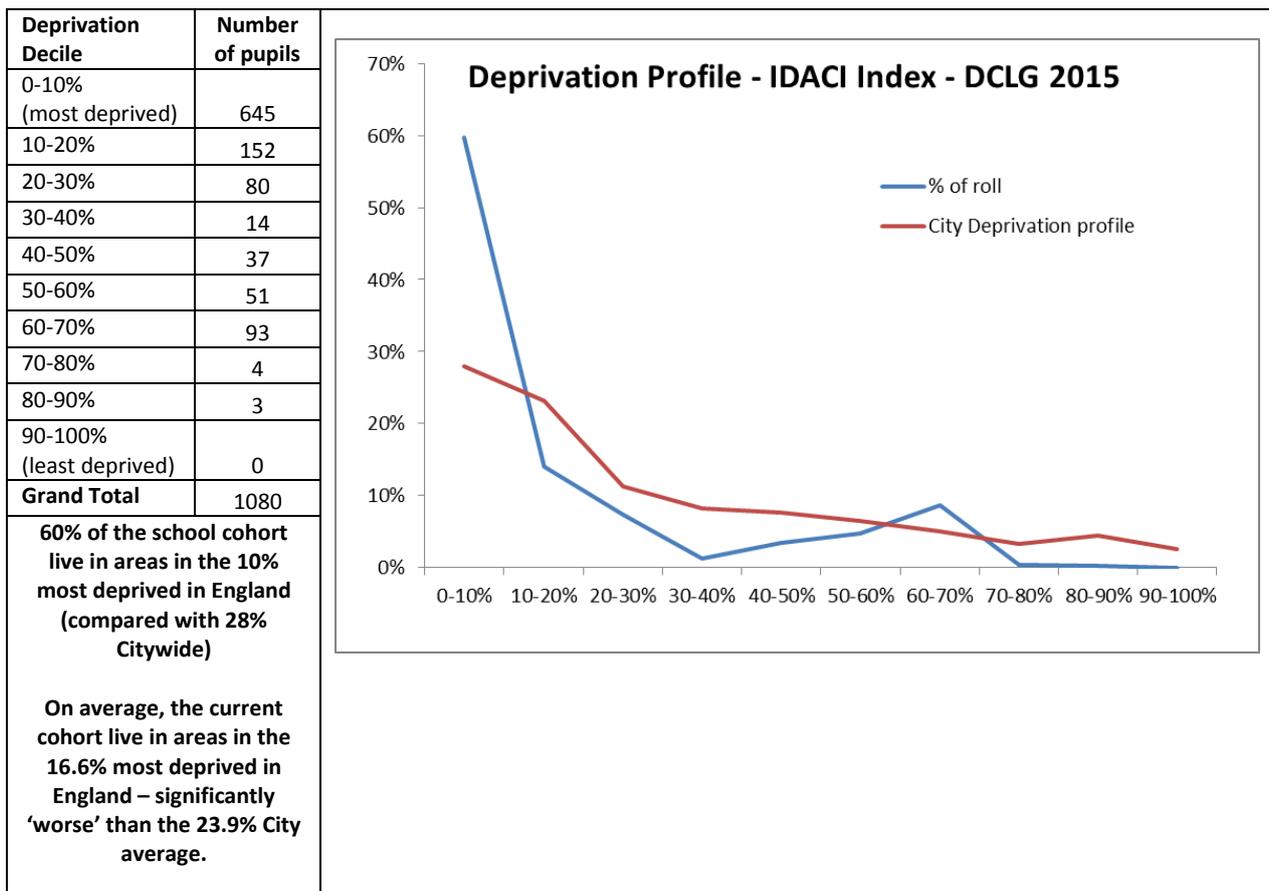


Position Statement and Characteristics of the Discovery Academy

The Academy is part of the Alpha Academies Trust, a Multi Academies Trust. The Discovery Academy was created in 2011 from the merger of two predecessor schools, Edensor Technology College and Mitchell High School. The Academy relocated to a new purpose built school in September 2013, it is a larger than average 11-16 academy situated in the Bentilee area of Stoke-on-Trent. Bentilee is an area of very high deprivation and unemployment with an IDACI rank of 549, which puts the area in the 2% most deprived in the country.

Current Academy Cohort by Deprivation Characteristic



The vast majority of students are from white British families, with only 8.2% of EAL students compared to a national of 14.4%. The ability level on entry is significantly below average and the proportion of students eligible for Pupil Premium (PP) has risen steadily to 55%, well above the national average of 28.5%. Over 15% of students have a special educational need (SEN), statement, education health and care (EHC) plan or are SEN support.

The academy was judged to have serious weaknesses in January 2015 after a number of years of declining standards. Steps taken to address the weaknesses include: replacing weaker staff with outstanding teachers through a creative recruitment strategy. The introduction of the new Behaviour for Learning system, revised curriculum and an extensive CPD programme for all staff. Recruitment of some outstanding leaders and the development of all leaders through partnerships with teaching schools and leadership development agencies.

A new Principal and Vice Principal took position in January 2016 with a proven track record at their previous schools. They introduced a new mission statement of “expect excellence” that has led to a transformation in culture and ethos as evidenced from numerous visits from the DFE and Ofsted. The Ofsted inspection in Oct 2016 validated improvements in teaching, Personal Development Behaviour and Welfare, and leadership which were all judged good. Outcomes are now showing, in most headline measures, a positive three year trend.

The SLT Team are supported by a Chief Executive Officer that operates across the Alpha Academies Trust (AAT) and the impact of the work by the leadership team continues to be monitored closely by a Governors’ Executive Board, which meets on a regular basis to hold senior and middle leaders to account.

Figure 1. Basic Characteristics of Discovery			
Characteristic	National	Discovery	Comparison
Number on Roll	957	1084	Above Average
% free school meal eligibility	28.5%	55.4%	Well Above average
% students from minority ethnic groups	25.6%	12.9%	Below average
% students with first language not English	14.4%	8.2%	Below average
Deprivation indicator	0.22	0.36	Well above average
Average point score KS2	28.7	26.9	Well Below average

Leadership at the Academy has set a vision and created a culture that enables students to excel. Leadership since 2016 has developed a value system around 'Expect Excellence' that has changed the mindset of all stakeholders. Every aspect of the Academy's work is now driven to deliver excellence, a strategy outlined in the 2016-2019 Strategic Ambitions document.

Indicated by:

- Positive four year trend in the majority of DfE performance measures
- Provision in the Academy has been transformed from inadequate to good. This has been validated by DfE, Ofsted and external Teaching and Learning reviews.
- The Academy is now oversubscribed filling all 240 places for the 2018-19 cohort with 1st choice preferences

Despite a challenging context, academy leaders are unwavering in their expectation that every child reaches their potential, outcomes particularly for disadvantaged, continue to improve. Governors systematically challenge leaders to ensure the Academy delivers on its 'Expect Excellence' goals. Accurate analysis and understanding of the Academy's effectiveness are ensuring high ability and boys are achieving better in existing year groups. These two groups have historically not shown an improving trend due to legacy factors in KS3.

Indicated by:

- The Progress 8 scores for disadvantaged students has moved from -1 to -0.1
- Projections for 2019 shows an improvement for high ability and boys
- External governance review, Ofsted and DfE have all evaluated "Governors are relentless in their drive for higher standards"

A good and meticulously planned curriculum ensures students are engaged in a broad diet over five years with provision to allow students to opt for specialist fields early on in their academy career. Information, advice and guidance seeks to inspire all students in a chosen destination and a differentiated provision ensures all students are matched with the appropriate support and advice.

Indicated by:

- Despite a weaker year group on entry the 2018 grade 5 and 7, attainment 8 and EBacc measure show continuing improvement
- EBacc entry was the highest in Stoke-on-Trent with 60% of the 2018 cohort entered
- NEET figures at zero / number of students continuing in education is above national average

The delivery of the curriculum is supported by high quality professional development. Academy staff benefit from weekly CPD sessions focussed on academy priorities and these are mainly led by academy leaders. External providers do support professional development, for example all leaders and most aspiring leaders have completed NPQ programmes to develop leadership behaviours that drive excellence.

Indicated by:

- Number of advisory and SLE positions has increased dramatically over the last two years
- CPD sessions evaluated positively by SLT, where staff debate and engage in pedagogy around set priorities

Relationships between staff and students are exemplary. Staff use creative ideas to overcome barriers and seek compensating solutions. Academy staff seek to 'level the playing field' and provide students with experiences, resources and guidance that is assumed in other contexts.

Indicated by:

- All students in years 7 and 8 take part after the academy day in a resilience curriculum
- Involvement in student leadership has risen dramatically
- 100% involvement in tuition and revision based activities after the academy day
- Persistently absent figures have reduced dramatically in 2018 to just below national average figures

SMSC along with British values are promoted effectively across the Academy. Partnerships with parents and the community give stakeholders a stake in how the Academy develops and is creating a positive climate in where the Academy is perceived as serving the community well. Safeguarding is a strength of the Academy.

Indicated by:

- Ofsted 2016 reported "Students feel safe, are safe and know how to keep themselves free from danger in a range of situations, including in relation to radicalisation and extremism"
- Regular attendance at half termly Parent Forum / parent information evenings
- High percentage of parent's state provision at the Academy is good or better
- Calendar of community events have received positive community feedback
- "The well-being and safety of pupils are given the highest priority." *Ofsted 2016*

Main Improvement priorities to secure outstanding:

- Secure substantial progress, particularly for boys and the high attaining group through priorities being driven through the excellence curriculum
- To develop further the intensity in teaching and learning to secure more outstanding practice
- To improve further the attendance of students at the Academy

Teaching and Learning at the Discovery Academy is 'Good' and aligns with both external reviews and internal monitoring. The risks to not maintaining 'Good' is teaching that focuses on a systematic approach rather than a depth and breadth of teaching and learning.

To mitigate beyond 'Good' and continue to develop 'Outstanding' practice, we will enhance our;

- Consistency of quality first teaching
- 'High levels' of stretch and challenge: through questioning and feedback
- Inspiration and intensity
- Pedagogy targeting high ability and boys

Teaching and learning is driven by our 'Expect Excellence' ethos and is pivotal to our school culture. Teachers systematically plan for progress and bespoke plan to effectively challenge thinking. Deep subject knowledge and understanding is demonstrated within the classroom to ensure engagement and develop inspiration. Indeed, teachers strive to provide students with high quality questioning and feedback to also identify misconceptions and to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills so that students' know what they need to do to improve and thrive.

Indicated by:

- *'The Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment is judged as 'Good' Ofsted 2016*
- External Whole School Review validates internal monitoring and *'The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good with aspects of outstanding practice'*. Andrew Reid – Former HMI
- There is a trend of improvement in English 5+ 44% 2017, 47% 2018
- There is a trend of improvement in Maths 5+ 28% 2017, 36% 2018
- 7+ Attainment in Maths 6% 2017, 13% 2018 and English 6% 2017, 9% 2018
- Attainment 8 scores again improved in 2018 despite a weaker year group on entry
- Overall results show improvement in attainment 8 - Progress 8 score -0.7 2015 – 0.12 2017, - 0.10 2018 (to be validated)

The Discovery Academy has a thorough CPD programme which supports staff at all career levels and is mapped across the year. CPD is calendared and is led by a range of staff, as the Academy continues to enhance a thriving sharing culture and support effectiveness. Faculty Leads and Lead Practitioners are also instrumental in ensuring that the CPD provision within faculties is bespoke, dependent on Teaching and Learning monitoring findings, student outcome data and in-school progress data, directing the needs of the faculty or individual members of the team. Whole school CPD foci continues to not only ensure consistency but to further develop outstanding practice in number of areas.

Indicated by:

- In the stronger lessons there is a depth of teaching that inspires students and creates and intensity of learning – we recognise that where practice is not as strong practitioners use a more systematic approach
- The impact of the CPD programmes has seen improvements to teaching, learning and assessment have ensured the Academy has not only reversed declining standards significantly over the years to now have received a 'good' judgement from Ofsted (2016)
- CPD is mapped and calendared throughout the year focusing on developing the curriculum and ensuring a sustained consistency of quality first teaching across the Academy
- Internal monitoring of Teaching and Learning across the Academy using a combination of lesson observation, work scrutiny and homework triangulates that over 85% (2018) of teaching is good or better – and validated by external consultants

- The Student Leadership team has frequently been consulted and opinions audited to inform CPD delivery and they have also reported and improvement in engagement and assessment
- Behaviour average reduced from 1.90 2015 to 1.71 2018 year to date
- Punctuality to lessons 9 per day on average 2016/17 to 4 per day on average
- Attendance has improved in 2018

Literacy is a successful continuing focus of the Academy and is embedded well across school. Indeed, Literacy marking features significantly in our marking policy and is executed thoroughly by all staff, across all subjects. Typically, 70% of students join the Academy with very low literacy skills (reading). Students have frequent reading opportunities and targeted literacy interventions have resulted in students quickly improving their reading ability, with many students now reading at chronological age and above, in both KS3 and 4.

Indicated by:

- *'Pupils benefit from a good range of opportunities to extend their reading and writing skills across subjects. More pupils are now making better progress as a result.'* Ofsted
- 2017 English 5+ 44% (NA 25%) 6+ 26% (NA 24%) 7+ 8% (NA 8%) **DAM check data**
- 2018 English 5+ 47% (NA 25%) 6+ 26% (NA 24%) 7+ 9% (NA 8%)
- Pupil Premium out-performing non-Pupil Premium on a number of measures
- Add reading data REP

Homework is embedded and regularly set to extend the learning of the classroom. There is a predetermined number of homework expected to be set by Faculties which is mostly met. In line with Faculty Policy and Practices, Faculties set challenging, age appropriate (Key Stage) homework which aims to consolidate and deepen the independent learning of the student. The Academy offers all students the opportunity to study at the Academy through various provisions such as free tuition and a dedicated space to revise.

Indicated by:

- Bespoke homework expectations for each Faculty
- On average 300 homeworks set weekly
- 98% completion rate
- Good engagement in after academy study activities

Improvement Priorities to achieve outstanding:

- To continue to monitor the consistency of Quality First Teaching and develop more outstanding practice
- To develop key priorities in an excellence curriculum that ensures all students progress (particularly high ability and boys):
 - An 'Excellence' Curriculum at KS3 that engages and inspires
 - Enhancing student life/success chances through development of literacy
 - Embedding memory/recall routines within the classroom and through revision

Leaders have actively and successfully pursued high standards of student behaviour. The students at the Discovery Academy take a pride in all aspects of their academy, including their learning, appearance and environment. The foundation for the change in culture and the raising of standards at the Academy has been through the 'Expect Excellence' ethos. Within 'Expect Excellence' the students have embraced our 'Pride and Respect' expectations which is demonstrated by good behaviours in and outside of the classroom. The 'Behaviour for Learning' system is rigorous and students receive a '1 to 4' grade for each lesson. This system is devised around growth mind-set principals and generates comprehensive student behaviour data that links to rewards and sanctions. The vast majority of students are equipped for learning and are keen to learn. The students show respect for each other and through a well-developed SMSC & PSHE programme are tolerant and open to difference. The student council is an established, independent and instrumental aspect of academy life and plays a significant role in embedding the 'Expect Excellence' ethos and driving forward academy improvement.

Indicated by:

- Permanent Exclusions are at the national average (0.08%)
- Fixed Term Exclusions are at 8.1% which is below the national average (8.5%)
- The behaviour average of all students has reduced from 1.90 (2015) to 1.71 (2018)
- Standards of student uniform and movement around the Academy are good
- The student council has a high profile and significant impact on academy life
- There are few instances of bullying and these are dealt with swiftly and effectively

Students at the Discovery Academy value their education and are proud to be members of our community. Attendance has improved significantly over the previous four years and the majority of students show that they enjoy attending. The attendance of students who have previously shown exceptionally high rates of absence are showing marked and sustained improvements. The implementation of a redesigned and improved pastoral team has supported the whole academy priority for improved attendance.

Indicated by:

- The overall academy attendance figure has increased from 89.8% in 2013 to 94.0%
- Persistent Absence has reduced from 20.2% to 16.1%
- Punctuality records show that there has been a sustained reduction in students being late to the Academy
- Lesson punctuality has improved significantly with students moving around the building with urgency within three minutes
- Attendance to additional lessons such as enrichment activities, intervention and tuition has been extremely high

The Academy is an orderly and a calm environment where students respond quickly to instructions from staff and peers. Low level disruption in lessons is tackled decisively and students conduct themselves well throughout the academy day, including during lesson changeovers, break times and lunchtimes. Staff have a high visibility and clear systems are in place to encourage good student movement where previously there had been evident some boisterous behaviour. Behaviour expectations are high and staff are consistent in applying and enforcing expectations. A code '7' is monitored by form tutors to ensure students are equipped each morning and there is a student led equipment shop to support this. Pastoral systems are embedded and individual faculties take

responsibility for faculty level behaviour, sanctions and rewards. Faculty behaviour representatives manage rewards and detentions to ensure that there is a high level of consistency.

Indicated by:

- Data shows an increase in rewards and a decrease in sanctions issued
- Observed behaviour of students around the academy building
- A reduction of code '7's' that indicates that student equipment is better

A well planned and delivered SMSC/PSHE curriculum supports the personal development of all students. The Academy actively promotes British Values. Pastoral time, each morning supports the excellent relationships that our staff foster with students and daily assemblies tackle key issues around SMSC. Enrichment opportunities for all students are being developed and enhanced with all Year 7 and 8 students taking part in a resilience curriculum after the academy day.

Indicated by:

- SMSC and PSHE lessons that promote Personal Development
- Drugs, Alcohol and Sexual Health and British Values education raised through PSHE lessons

Franklin Scholars supports the successful integration of Year 7 students into academy life. Students are paired with Year 10 students in a mentoring relationship where they support, stretch and improve their mentee's literacy skills, boost their social skills and further develop their resilience to deal with the challenges that lie ahead. Each week students complete 1:1 coaching sessions, setting achievable targets for the week ahead.

Indicated by:

- Successful mentoring support programme for Year 7 students
- Additional skills and attributes for Year 10 students include a sense of purpose, self-worth and responsibility which helps to build empathy, communication and leadership skills

Student leadership continues to grow in diversity and number with 40% of the current cohort taking up positions of some responsibility within the Academy. JUL add paragraph

Indicated by:

- More students applying for and taking up leadership roles in 2018 - an increase from 35 students in the current Year 11 to 60 students in Year 10

Improvement Priorities to achieve outstanding:

- Attendance to be at NA by the end of the 2018-2019 academic year
- Develop impeccable behaviour for learning
- Develop more extracurricular and leadership opportunities in KS3 to include the development of the Duke of Edinburgh programme
- PP attendance gap to be reduced with a focus upon white working class boys
- Persistent Absence to be below 16%

The Academy is proud of further improvements across a range of progress and attainment measures in 2018. Positive four year trends have been established across many DFE performance measures including Attainment 8, Progress 8, 4+ in English and Mathematics and 4+ in Mathematics. The percentage of students in 2018 achieving a 5+ in English and Maths has improved together with the overlap at 5+ in English and Maths. This is the result of improved teaching quality, a program of expert tuition and a school focus on revision and exam skills. Progress 8 is now not significantly different from national and much improved from the RI judgement in the last OFSTED inspection. In 2018, students' performance improved across a range of subjects at 4+ (A* to C) including Maths, English Literature, IT, History and Art. Many subjects in 2018 have achieved a higher percentage of grades 7+ (A* to A) including Maths, Art, Geography, History and ICT. Further improved outcomes are projected for 2019 across a range of progress and attainment measures including Progress 8, and attainment at Grades 4+ and 5+ in English and Maths. Students entered for the English Baccalaureate remains high compared to national. Progress in other year groups across a range of subjects including English and Maths shows a pattern of students meeting challenging targets. The Academy remains committed to improving literacy skills and reading ages, which has impacted positively on student attainment.

Indicated by:

- Progress 8 was -0.1 in 2018 compared with -0.7 in 2015.
- Improved attainment at 4+, 5+ and 7+ across a range of subjects including English and Maths.
- 4 year continuous improvement in Progress 8, Attainment 8 and 4+ in Maths.
- Improved 5+ in English and Maths.

Groups:

Progress 8 has shown further improvement for many groups of learners in 2018. This includes 4 years of continuous improved performance of PP students from -1.07 in 2015 to -0.1 in 2018. Many groups are also showing a 3 or 4 year trend of continuous improvement in progress 8 including girls, low ability, middle ability, non-PP and SEN with a statement.

Indicated by:

- Closing of the PP gap for 4 consecutive years.
- 4 year positive trend in Progress 8 for middle and low ability, girls, PP and non PP students.

In-Year Progress:

The progress projected in current Year 11 is showing a further improvement in 2019. This is due to further improvements in teaching quality, established teams in English, Mathematics, Science and a programme of tailored interventions with a focus on exam preparation, revision and the achievement of boys and high ability students. Levels of progress across a range of subjects including Maths and English are above challenging academy targets in Years 7 to 10. Students join the Academy with very low literacy skills and reading ages well below their chronological age. Academy records show that as a result of intensive literacy interventions students are quickly improving their reading ability.

Indicated by:

- Year 11 Progress 8 projection of -0.02 for 2019
- Students reading at chronological age has risen in each year group by around 30%
- Reduction of students reading at below 9y6 from 20% to 12% of the cohort

Improvement Priorities:

- Improve the Progress 8 score in English through developments at Key Stage 3 and 4
- Further improve the performance of boys with targeted interventions focusing on English and Maths
- Focus on the progress and attainment of high ability students.

As a result of the decisive action taken by the Trust and the Leadership Team to address the areas identified in the January 2015 Section 5 inspection, significant improvements have been made in all areas of the Ofsted framework. The Ofsted visit in October 2016 evaluated the Academy's own rigorous self-evaluation and consequently removed the Academy from 'Serious Weaknesses' and judged many areas as good.

In its self-evaluation the Academy's key judgements agreed with Ofsted that all key areas are good with the exception of outcomes Graded 3. Senior Leaders clearly identified why outcomes were not good in the 2016 inspection but now have secure evidence from judgements in teaching and learning, in-year attainment / progress measures and projections for the Year 11 cohort to suggest that outcomes are now good, which also secures overall effectiveness as good.

Figure 3. Summary Judgements

Key Aspect	Judgement
The outcomes of students at the school	Good (2)
The quality of teaching in the school	Good (2)
The quality of leadership in and quality of management of the school	Outstanding (1)
The behaviour and safety of students at the school	Good (2)