

Inspection of Nottingham Academy

Greenwood Road, Bakersfield, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG3 7EB

Inspection dates: 8–9 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Nottingham Academy is an improving school. Pupils have different experiences depending on which phase of the school they attend and which teachers they have. Not all teachers have high expectations of pupils. The quality of education in the early years, primary school and sixth form is stronger than in the secondary school. The quality of education at key stage 4 is not consistently good. There is more to do to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they should.

The culture of the school is welcoming and inclusive. Most pupils are happy and say they are well looked after by staff. They recognise the improvements that are taking place. Most pupils say that, although some incidents of bullying occur, they are confident that staff will sort issues out quickly. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They also say, however, that, sometimes, antisocial behaviour from some pupils affects their enjoyment of school.

Pupils appreciate the range of extra-curricular opportunities that are available. For example, pupils participate in many sporting activities, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and charity work. They are particularly proud of their involvement with the neighbouring 'Wildcats' basketball academy. Leaders ensure that all pupils learn about the risks to their well-being in school and in the local community.

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

The school does not provide a consistently high-quality education. There is too much variation in the quality of education in and between different subjects. This is particularly the case in the secondary phase, where pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Pupils' learning is not always well planned or sequenced. Pupils do not learn and remember important knowledge well enough over the long term. Subject leaders do not all share their expertise to ensure that all pupils enjoy a well-thought-out curriculum. Leaders in the secondary phase do not make sure that the curriculum is suitable for all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders are reviewing how learning is organised. They have taken recent action to improve the quality of education. It is too soon to see the impact of this on pupils' achievement. The curriculum for physical education is strong throughout the school. Leaders plan to include all pupils. Pupils feed off their teachers' enthusiasm.

Children thrive in Reception. They settle into school well. Leadership in this area is strong. The curriculum is designed to stimulate children's interests, such as the 'woodland alien landing'. Staff teach phonics and early mathematics effectively. Leaders support teachers in meeting children's needs well. Staff engage well with parents and carers so that they can support their children's learning. The vibrant environment adds to children's enjoyment of learning.

In the primary phase, pupils achieve well in most subjects. Leaders' planning of the primary curriculum is carefully considered. Staff help pupils to establish a love of reading by choosing books which interest them. Teaching in Year 1 does not build well enough on children's reading in Reception. Phonics is not taught consistently between the early years and Year 1. This means that pupils are less confident in reading unfamiliar words. The teaching of mathematics helps pupils to develop both fluency and reasoning.

In the sixth form, students study courses that suit their interests and how well they have achieved previously. Leaders have improved the support that students receive so that they understand how to study their subjects. Achievement is rising but students could do even better. Leaders provide many opportunities to further develop students' character. These include mentoring younger pupils and community charity and enterprise activities.

Leaders foster an inclusive ethos. There have been no permanent exclusions. Pupils in alternative provision attend and behave well. They follow appropriate courses to help prepare them for their next steps.

Levels of attendance have improved overall. However, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school varies between the school phases. Too many pupils in the secondary phase are regularly absent from school.

Pupils, parents and staff report that some pupils do not behave as well as they should. Most pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school site, particularly in the primary phase. Some pupils are not as respectful as they should be. Sometimes, they disrupt others' learning. Pupils in the secondary phase report that behaviour in school corridors can sometimes be disrespectful. Not all staff follow the school's behaviour policy consistently.

Leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development is strong throughout the school. There is a clear, age-appropriate programme for personal, social, health and economic education. Leaders use their knowledge of the local safety issues to help them plan what to teach. Themes include online safety, gang culture and knife crime. Leaders ensure that pupils make a positive contribution to the local community. Groups of pupils have established food-bank collections and consulted about the use of halal meat in the kitchens, for example. Pupils benefit from many enriching experiences. For example, they visit the coastline, attend concerts and the theatre, and go on residential trips. There is a broad range of extra-curricular activities. In the primary phase, music is particularly popular. Many pupils enjoy sports and have access to the popular elite 'basketball academy'.

Leaders have ensured that the careers education programme is strong throughout the school. Staff nurture pupils' aspirations in the primary school. Support continues throughout school so that almost all pupils leave the school to go to further education or training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that the school's systems for safeguarding pupils are fit for purpose. Staff are well trained. Detailed record-keeping shows that staff follow reporting procedures well. Designated leaders have received extra training to help improve pupils' safety in the local community. They work closely with external agencies to keep vulnerable pupils safe. Leaders' awareness of local risks, including criminal and sexual exploitation, informs the teaching of safety. Leaders carry out the required checks to ensure that all adults working in the school are suitable. Leaders act swiftly to protect pupils, including when concerns arise about the conduct of adults.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that their vision for the curriculum is fully shared in this 'all-through' school. Not all subject leaders understand senior leaders' intent for the curriculum. Leaders must ensure that there is a common understanding of what the whole school is aiming to achieve as an all-through school.
- Achievement in the secondary school is not as good as it should be. Some subjects, such as science and history, are less consistently well planned than others. Subject leaders have not all ensured that their planning considers what pupils have previously learned. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is planned in such a way that pupils are helped to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they require to achieve well in this phase of their education. Leaders should also ensure that teachers' planning consistently considers the needs of pupils with SEND.
- The teaching of phonics is not consistent between the early years and key stage 1. Staff have not received recent training to ensure that they, and pupils, consistently use pure sounds. Leaders should ensure a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics in these phases so that pupils become more confident in their reading of unfamiliar words.
- Some pupils do not have appropriate attitudes to their learning or behaviour. Their conduct has a negative impact on the quality of education and enjoyment of learning for other pupils. Leaders must ensure that the school's behaviour policy is followed by all staff and respected by all 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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 school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	135881
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10087399
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2,887
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	195
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Hamlin
Principal	Ged Rae, Marcus Shepherd, Steve Jones (principal at each site)
Website	www.nottinghamacademy.org/
Date of previous inspection	10 November 2015, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Nottingham Academy is part of the Greenwood Academies Trust. The school opened in September 2009. The school currently operates on three different sites.
- Primary and early years education are provided on the Sneinton Boulevard site. Provision for Years 7 and 8 is also accommodated on this site. There are two sites in the secondary phase. Secondary education for Years 9 to 11 is provided on the Greenwood Road site and for Years 7 to 11 on the Ransom Road site. Sixth-form provision is provided at the Greenwood Road site.
- Trustees have agreed, with the Department for Education, to separate the Ransom Road site from Nottingham Academy in September 2020.
- The school operates an alternative provision for a small number of pupils on the Ransom Road site.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the principals of the three respective sites that make up Nottingham Academy. We also met with other members of the school's senior leadership team. We held meetings with leaders for the sixth form, the early years, the provision for pupils with SEND and careers education.
- We met with the school's designated leaders for safeguarding. We evaluated policies, procedures and record-keeping. This included a review of the school's single central register and the school's processes for recruiting staff.
- We held meetings with five representative groups of teaching and support staff across the school. We also held a meeting with a group of newly qualified teachers.
- We met with several groups of pupils, including students in the sixth form. We also spoke with pupils during lessons and informally around the school site.
- We held a meeting with the chief executive officer and the director of education of the Greenwood Academies Trust.
- We carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, science and physical education. In each subject, we held discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. We also visited lessons and scrutinised the work in pupils' books.
- We considered the 120 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including 85 free-text comments. We considered the 99 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no submissions to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Chris Stevens, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen Williams	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Davies	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sally Manz	Ofsted Inspector
Laurence Reilly	Ofsted Inspector
Hazel Henson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Simon Hollingsworth	Her Majesty's Inspector

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