

Sutherland House School

Sutherland Road, Carlton, Nottingham, NG3 7AP

Inspection dates	6–7 October 2015
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There is not enough consistently good teaching because leaders do not always monitor the quality of teaching and learning effectively.
- Leaders do not yet have clear systems to scrutinise the quality of teachers' planning. As a result, weaker teaching is unchallenged.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is not consistently strong enough to ensure that all pupils make the progress they are capable of making.
- Some staff do not expect enough of pupils, and they plan work which pupils can already do.
- Leaders do not have a clear enough view of the achievement of different groups of pupils. Consequently, they are not able to hold staff to account or support them effectively to ensure that all learners reach their full potential.
- The school improvement plan does not clearly identify actions to monitor the long-term effectiveness of recent developments.
- The lack of formal systems to support and challenge staff means that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the whole school is not as good as it could be.

The school has the following strengths

- The well-being of pupils and their families is the central driving force to all that the school does.
- The current headteacher and other senior leaders and governors have provided stability and care to the school during a prolonged period of staff change and turbulence.
- The school's specialism in communication and behaviour programmes continues to have a positive impact upon the education, well-being and lives of the pupils.
- Excellent systems to support the transition of pupils into school ensure that they settle quickly and develop trusting relationships within impressively short periods of time.
- Pupils conduct themselves calmly and safely across the school because their personal, social and communication needs are met extremely well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by making sure that:
 - all teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils, based upon up-to-date knowledge of what they can already do
 - the teaching of English and mathematics across the school is improved by ensuring that all staff follow the agreed policies and approaches.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that leaders:
 - create a culture of heightened expectation across all year groups and in all classes
 - implement a clear system for managing the performance of staff so that all staff are confident about how to improve their practice
 - have a sharper view of the achievement of different groups of pupils so that patterns of progress or decline can be more accurately tracked.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved further to bring about the developments needed in the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The school has been through a challenging period of unsettled leadership and this has had a negative impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school. Despite this, the atmosphere on each of the five sites remains warm, calm and welcoming.
- The current headteacher has given the school stability during this difficult time. The quality of relationships between leaders, staff and parents is improving.
- A new leadership structure has been agreed but will not be in place fully until the school moves onto its new site next year.
- A wide range of therapies are offered to pupils of all ages. These include speech and language, behavioural and occupational therapy. Managers and staff from each of these teams work closely with school leaders to ensure that the holistic needs of pupils are met well. This is a strength of the school.
- Leaders are not currently checking effectively enough that the agreed systems for recording pupils' targets and profiles are being followed by all staff. As a result, in some classes there are gaps in these documents and this means that it is not always clear what next steps of learning need to be planned for individual pupils.
- One student was confident to talk to inspectors about how the school helps him understand the challenges of adult life in modern Britain. He proudly said: 'I have a clear sense of what is right and wrong anyway but we have learnt about how to listen to one another. I know who to go to if I need help. There is strong culture of respect here – always has been.'
- Recent staff training has focused on the management of pupils' behaviour. Staff say that opportunities to access training to improve teaching, learning and assessment have been limited over the past year. This is reflected in the inconsistency in the quality of teaching across the school.
- The current school improvement plan identifies clear actions to improve key areas of the curriculum. A new leader has recently been appointed to improve the teaching of English and mathematics; the review of subject policies has begun; and a programme of staff training agreed. However, it is too early to see the true impact of these important developments.
- Leaders and managers have not been effective in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. There is no formal system for the regular observation of teaching and support staff. Staff are currently unclear about the current systems and some have not received feedback about their teaching for a long time.
- Leaders have embedded clear systems for tracking the achievement of individual pupils and students but this information is not used well enough to inform planning or to hold teachers to account for the outcomes of their pupils.
- Leaders do not have a clear view of the achievement of different groups of pupils. As a result, they cannot be sure that the most able and most vulnerable groups of pupils are making the progress that they should, or whether gaps between the most vulnerable pupils and others in the school are closing or becoming wider.
- The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to take part in music and sport, and to celebrate different festivals. However, the headteacher recognises that a review of the curriculum is overdue to ensure that the quality of teaching for pupils' technical, social and artistic learning is as strong as their learning in the areas of communication and personal well-being.
- The school receives additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have a clear view of the impact of particular expenditure on the needs of individual pupils but do not currently analyse the impact of how this funding is helping to close the gaps between these pupils and other groups of pupils.
- The headteacher has started a programme of partnership working with other schools to ensure that the school's assessments of pupils' progress are accurate.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors and trustees at the school have been rigorous in their approach to improving systems for safeguarding. They have worked in partnership with two local authorities to review procedures for safeguarding and health and safety. They have been honest and open about areas where

improvements have been needed. However, they recognise that there is more work to be done to ensure that all governors have an up-to-date view of all agreed policies and practices so that they can hold leaders to account effectively.

- Leaders are working hard to make sure that plans to relocate the five current sites to a one-site provision do not detract from the essential work of raising ambition for pupils' academic learning.
- Governors have worked hard in the last year to create a climate of support and greater challenge in governing body meetings. More governors are confident to ask questions, although some governors do not feel that they are always updated as quickly as needed about important events in school.
- The Chair of Governors has been in post for just over a year and is also a trustee of the charity. He has a close working relationship with the trust's Chief Executive Officer and the headteacher. As a result, a shared vision for future improvements at the school is beginning to take shape.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have worked hard to review and improve existing systems and have invested heavily in staff training.
- The school has effective partnerships with professionals in social care and health teams in each of the local authorities where pupils live. This contributes to the good overall safety and well-being of pupils.
- The school's leader with responsibility for safeguarding is passionate about her role and ensures that any referrals to different agencies are recorded in an accurate and timely fashion. The efficiency and rigour of her work contributes greatly to the quality of safeguarding throughout the whole school.
- It is clear from the behaviour of pupils, as well as from what those who are able to communicate say, that they feel safe in school, and that they trust and like the adults who care for them.
- Each of the school bases has a clear and effective system for keeping the site secure. Everyone follows the agreed procedures for checking the identity of visitors. School staff take part in the arrival and departure routines of pupils to make sure that they are safe when moving in and out of school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently strong enough across the school. This is particularly so for pupils within the primary and lower secondary classes.
- Not all teachers and support staff have consistently high enough expectations of pupils. This means that learning activities are sometimes poorly organised, resulting in valuable learning time being lost because the resources needed are not readily at hand.
- Where teaching is weakest, pupils' progress is slowed because they can already do the activities that have been planned for them.
- In one primary class, the lesson had not been effectively planned because staff viewed it as 'holding time'. In this same class, it was evident that not all staff knew the learning needs of pupils.
- The teaching of English and mathematics across the school is not good enough to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress.
- Teachers and support staff do not follow the school's policy for marking and feedback consistently. Where teaching is strongest, teachers and support staff use clear and concise language very effectively to ensure that pupils know what they have done well and what they should do next. However, the work in books of the most-able pupils shows that the agreed practice for giving written feedback is not being followed.
- Staff are highly skilled in using appropriate methods of communication with each pupil. As a result, pupils are able to use a combination of speech, symbols and signs effectively. This enables them to take part in individual learning, small group activities and less structured play and social times.
- Teaching assistants provide sensitive, skilled and effective support to pupils. This is most consistently seen in Key Stages 3 and 4. In one lesson, a student was making impressive progress with his speech because the teaching assistant not only fully understood his needs but had also secured his trust and enthusiasm for learning. She ensured that the work stretched his thinking as well as developing his skills of writing, which were at an early stage of development.
- Where teaching is strongest, staff are consistently taking steps to build on pupils' interests and significant events in their home lives. Some classes use 'clue bags' as a way of parents sharing important information about special family events or activities that their child has particularly enjoyed at home. This enables staff to build on these areas of personal interest in school to further extend pupils' learning in a way which is most meaningful and motivating to them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- The physical and emotional well-being of pupils is paramount to all that the school does. Once it has been decided that a child will become a pupil at Sutherland House, staff work in active partnership with the child and family, as well as the child's existing school, to ensure that their transition into school is as smooth as possible. As a result, the majority of pupils settle quickly.
- A range of communications systems are used effectively to ensure that there is regular contact between parents and the school. Parents told inspectors that they feel at ease to telephone the school at any time if they want to discuss any aspect of their child's well-being.
- The vast majority of pupils who are able to express their views say that bullying is rare. One Year 12 student stated: 'One of the best things about the school is that there is always someone to go to if you need help. Better than any other school I've been to.'
- Leaders check that risk assessments relating to the needs of individual pupils, as well as activities and trips, are completed and shared with staff.
- The majority of pupils try hard and clearly enjoy their learning. However, where teaching is weakest and lessons and activities have not been planned well, pupils are not stretched enough and their attitudes to learning are less positive.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils generally behave very well across the school because their emotional and communication needs are consistently met. This is a strength of the school.
- Recent training in behaviour management systems has increased staff confidence and has contributed to improved staff morale.
- The vast majority of pupils conduct themselves well at all times, including lunchtimes and playtimes. Staff provide a wide range of equipment for outdoor playtimes and encourage pupils to select and use this independently.
- The school has recently reviewed its policy for e-safety. There is a new leader for this area of learning who is successfully introducing a rigorous system of staff training. Examples were seen during the inspection where students' behaviour online changed and became safer as a direct result of teaching from staff.
- Leaders track the attendance of pupils carefully. They quickly make contact with families and other agencies if a pupil's attendance becomes a concern.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Pupils enter the school significantly behind national expectations for pupils of a similar age. They have often experienced a number of different school placements before they come to Sutherland House and it is not unusual for them to start at different points in the school year. From these unsettled starting points, the majority of pupils make good or better progress.
- Senior leaders recognise that they could be challenging some of the most-able pupils more. They are also aware that they do not have an accurate view of the progress of different groups of pupils, including girls, disadvantaged pupils and those with English as an additional language, in different subjects. This is hampering leaders in ensuring that all pupils are making the very best possible progress in relation to their starting points.
- Leaders know that the teaching of English and mathematics is not strong enough for all pupils, including those studying 16 to 19 programmes, to make the progress needed. School information also shows that the rate of progress that pupils are currently making in speaking and listening has declined over the past year. Leaders are looking at this as part of the school's root and branch review of the teaching of English

across the school.

- The headteacher has an accurate view of what good teaching looks like. However, the lack of clear systems for assessing, supporting and challenging teachers means that teaching and learning are not as good as they could be.
- The school has strong partnerships with local mainstream schools and uses these to good effect for individual pupils. One very proud student told one of the inspectors that he is studying A-level physics. He also read a section of prose from a complex piece of non-fiction with fluency and confidence.
- The rate of progress of pupils in the upper school is generally stronger than that of those in the lower school because teaching is often stronger.
- Pupils of all ages benefit from the high levels of staffing and small numbers in each class. Governors and trustees are committed to maintaining these levels as they regard them as being crucial to pupils' well-being and their ability to make progress.
- Pupils are prepared well for the world of work because of the quality of systems for transition from the school to colleges and a wide range of work placements.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- There is a strong emphasis throughout the school on educating the whole person but this is especially so in the delivery of 16 to 19 programmes. As a result, students are supported to access programmes which are well-matched to their needs and interest. This determined focus on supporting young peoples' well-being and personal needs is indicative of the quality of care throughout the school. However, the lack of clear systems for performance management means that staff have not been supported and challenged to think or reflect about how their practice could be improved even further. This means that teachers do not always have high enough aspirations for their pupils.
- The school improvement plan for 2015–2016 identifies the need to increase the proportion of students who leave school with formally recognised qualifications and to ensure that all pupils who are predicted to gain GCSE and other qualifications at the end of Key Stage 2 go on to do so by the end of Key Stage 4.
- The school offers a wide range of accredited and non-accredited courses, including ASDAN Awards, Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALAN), Entry Level Certificates and OCR Functional Skills. There is a good rate of completion of these courses so that students gain certificates and diplomas as they progress through their studies. There is also an effective partnership with a local academy, which enables students to study and achieve GCSE qualifications.
- The majority of programmes are well planned and no student leaves Sutherland House without being placed in education, employment or training (NEET). The proportion of students who make progress as they embark on their next stage of education is increasing.
- Leaders ensure that students receive much guidance about the skills and knowledge they need to live independently and to enter the world of work. Teachers know their students very well. Teachers nurture students' interests, skills and personal qualities so that these may be applied to career opportunities in which they have the best chance of success. Leaders plan study programmes and work placements accordingly for individual students. Leaders ensure that students' opinions and ambitions are central to decisions made, often with close liaison and collaboration with parents and outside agencies.
- The school's information about contact details for placements is not always accurate and, on occasion, this creates difficulties when they need to be contacted. However, the school does carry out all appropriate checks before students access a placement. Students make good progress during these experiences because of the care and time that staff invest in planning and pre-placement visits.
- Students are supported to take an active part in deciding which courses they want to take. Staff prepare detailed information to ensure that everyone understands the students' needs well before the placement begins. The school recognises that such planning and preparation is crucial to the success of these partnerships and ensures that very few placements are unsuccessful.

School details

Unique reference number	134889
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10007929

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	All-through primary and secondary special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	George Smith
Headteacher	Joe Butler
Telephone number	0115 987 3375
Website	www.autismeastmidlands.org.uk/sutherland-house-school
Email address	Carlton@sutherlandhouse.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 March 2011

Information about this school

- Sutherland House is a non-maintained special school for pupils and students with autism and is managed by Autism East Midlands, formerly known as Nottingham Regional Society for Adults and Children with Autism (NORSACA)
- Currently, the school does not have any children under the age of six. The majority of pupils are White British boys. A significant number of the pupils present challenging behaviour and have additional disabilities or special educational needs. Many of the pupils have attended a number of different schools and some have had long-term absence from education before coming to Sutherland House.
- The school has specialist status in communication and interaction and works in close partnership with colleagues from specialist therapy backgrounds who have wider roles across the whole of the East Midlands. Speech therapy, occupational therapy and behavioural support are woven into the curriculum across the school.
- The charity Autism East Midlands is led by the Chief Executive Officer who leads on strategic and partnership work, as well as acting as an adviser and consultant to the school.
- The structure of leadership across the school has recently been reviewed. There is no longer an Executive principal role. The headteacher has overarching responsibility for all of the provision across all of the sites and is answerable to the charity trustees and the governing body.

- The school is located across five different sites in and around Nottingham. The school is due to be relocated to one site in Nottingham City in January 2016. Preparations for this are well advanced.
- Pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2 are located at the Ravenshead site and those from Key Stages 2 and 3 at the Carlton site. Pupils from Key Stages 3 and 4 are located at Harby Lodge and Key Stage 4 and post-16 students at Falcon House and the Continuing Education Centre.
- Students in the post-16 provision access courses at Central College and Blue Coat Academy. The school has long-established partnerships with a wide range of work experience providers, mostly in and around Nottingham city. These include shops, hairdressers and care homes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited each of the five sites. One inspector also visited two work experience settings and spoke to three different providers.
- Inspectors observed 12 lessons. They had five meetings with individual students and spoke informally with pupils during lessons and playtimes. They looked at work in pupils' books, work folders and displays of work across the sites. Inspectors heard pupils read in both lower and upper school classes.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteachers, and spoke to teachers with responsibility for different parts of the curriculum.
- The lead inspector met with the Chief Executive of Autism East Midlands, the Chair of Governors and team leaders and a therapist from Autism East Midlands.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the two local authorities in which the majority of pupils live. She also had telephone meetings with an educational consultant who is currently working with the school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's plan for improvement, policies and risk assessment and records of pupils' achievement.
- Inspectors spoke to staff, individually and in groups, and considered 64 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and took account of 52 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Clare Cossor, lead inspector

Amanda Carter-Fraser

Karen Lewis

Her Majesty's Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015

