

Sutton Community Academy

High Pavement, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire NG17 1EE

Inspection dates

24–25 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership is outstanding. The principal and the senior team have successfully raised expectations of what pupils can achieve. Consequently, they have embedded an ethos of high aspiration, hard work and sharply focused improvement across the school.
- Leaders at all levels have an accurate view of the quality of the school's provision. They take swift action where they identify any underperformance.
- Governors and trustees are committed and highly effective. The sharp challenge given by the local governing body and the support of the Academy Transformation Trust have contributed to the improvements since the previous inspection.
- From low starting points, pupils in Year 11 in 2016 made progress that was greater than the national average. They achieved well in a number of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils, especially those from low and high starting points, made good progress by the end of key stage 4 in a range of subjects.
- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. This is because of the high-quality support and monitoring provided by leaders.
- Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They show high levels of respect and consideration for others. Their behaviour in and around the school is of an exceptionally high standard.
- The level of care for vulnerable pupils, such as those who experience emotional difficulties, is exceptional. As a result, these pupils develop the confidence to take part in lessons and experience success.
- Leaders have created a well-designed curriculum which provides wide-ranging opportunities for pupils to secure their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The sixth form is good. The teaching and support students receive enable them to achieve well so they are well prepared for their next stage of life.
- Middle-ability pupils, including those that are disadvantaged, are not making as much progress as they could in all their subjects.
- Although outcomes are improving, results in some subjects, such as geography, graphics and business studies, lag behind others.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils have acted on the advice they are given about how to improve their work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching, learning and achievement outstanding, including in the sixth form, by:
 - raising standards in the subjects that do not perform as well as others
 - continuing to use the good teaching in the school to improve the small amount of weaker teaching
 - providing more challenging learning opportunities for middle-ability pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, to make rapid progress
 - ensuring that pupils respond fully to the feedback and guidance that they are given about how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Since the previous inspection, which took place when he was new to post, the principal has taken firm and decisive action to implement a culture of higher expectations of both staff and pupils. In doing so, he has focused unremittingly on improving the quality of teaching, pupils' attitudes to learning and pupils' outcomes. This focus has led to improvements in all of these areas.
- Under the inspirational leadership of the principal, staff have worked collectively and consistently to embed an ethos of mutual respect, high aspiration and consideration for others within the school community. Consequently, pupils, parents and staff are almost unanimous in their praise for the progress the school has made in the last two years.
- Leaders at all levels have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have worked very effectively with external advisers such as local teaching schools and the Academy Transformation Trust's improvement officers to confirm this evaluation and address areas of weakness.
- Leaders have improved teaching rapidly so that it is now of a much higher quality overall. Leaders maintain detailed records about the quality of teaching, using an array of information about pupils' achievement and the quality of pupils' work.
- Senior leaders have rightly increased the rigour with which they manage teachers' performance. Teachers' performance targets focus strongly on pupils' achievement, including the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have worked firmly but fairly with teachers when performance has not been good enough and this has led to improvements in teaching.
- The training that teachers receive links closely to the school's priorities for improvement. Staff are able to access wide-ranging opportunities to develop their classroom skills, particularly through sharing best practice and receiving training through the local teaching schools. The use of lead practitioners from the trust and also within the school to support improvements in teaching has been particularly effective, especially in mathematics.
- Staff who are new to teaching are very well supported. They appreciate the high-quality mentoring and support they receive.
- Senior leaders work closely with subject leaders to check on the quality of teaching and on pupils' achievement in their subject areas. They quickly identify where performance does not meet the school's raised expectations and undertake effective action to challenge this and bring about improvements.
- Leaders are rigorous in their use of assessment. They ensure that pupils' progress is checked regularly. They use this information effectively to identify where pupils are falling behind. Close liaison and sharing of information between the subject leaders and the leaders of learning and achievement for each year group ensure that appropriate support is in place to enable pupils to catch up. As a result, pupils' outcomes are improving strongly across the great majority of subjects.
- The school uses additional funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils and those pupils in Year 7 who arrive at the school behind in their communication and numeracy skills. Leaders regularly review the support these pupils receive and adapt

the support as appropriate. As a result, those pupils who are entitled to this additional funding who have previously fallen behind are now catching up. Where this is not the case, senior leaders ensure that these pupils receive further support.

- The leader of the provision that supports the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities uses additional funding well to support these pupils in their learning. For example, the school has invested in training for the adults who work closely with these pupils so that they have expertise in supporting their specific learning needs. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress in their learning due to the effective support they receive.
- The well-designed curriculum enables pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills across a broad range of subjects. Furthermore, leaders have adapted the curriculum to meet the different learning needs of the school's pupils. For example, the most able have been provided with the opportunity to study more rigorous academic qualifications at key stage 4, including all three science subjects and two modern foreign languages. The least able receive extra opportunities to develop their communication and numeracy skills where this is necessary.
- A comprehensive programme of advice and guidance ensures that pupils are well informed about their options for careers, education and training. Compulsory citizenship placements within the local community for all pupils in Year 10, as well as two weeks' work experience and educational visits to local places of worship, further enhance the curriculum and help to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- There are wide-ranging opportunities for pupils to secure their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including their understanding of fundamental British values. The school's personal, social, health and careers education programme (PSHCE), together with assemblies and 'News Friday' tutor time, provides pupils with effective opportunities to consider their place in the community, both within the school and beyond. This is enhanced by the many trips and visits to places of interest, such as local universities. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need to show respect and consideration to others.

Governance of the school

- Governance is outstanding and provides high levels of support and challenge that have contributed to the school's considerable progress.
- The local governing body and the trust have high aspirations and expectations for the pupils in the community. They are passionate in their quest to improve outcomes for all pupils. They have a clear and accurate view of the many strengths, and the specific weaknesses, in the school's provision. Governors use this understanding to provide insightful challenge to leaders.
- Governors meet senior and middle leaders regularly to hold them to account for the quality of education. Where they are not satisfied, they do not accept excuses and set challenging targets for improvement.
- Governors are rigorous in their management of the performance of the principal and in their review of performance-related pay for staff.
- The governors review pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour thoroughly, especially those who are disadvantaged or those who need to catch up. They oversee how the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and Year 7 catch-up support is

used. They routinely evaluate the information they receive and seek to ensure that as many pupils as possible benefit from this funding, both academically and socially. They have identified that middle-ability pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, should be a key focus of their spending following the 2016 GCSE results.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central record of checks on staff is appropriate and is routinely quality-assured by members of the trust. Staff files are well maintained. The appointments of staff meet all statutory requirements.
- Checks on visitors to the school are thorough and they are given clear guidance on what to do if they have any concerns relating to safeguarding.
- The work of the designated safeguarding leader, and the designated teacher for children looked after, is precise, careful and tenacious. Referrals within school and to the local authority are timely, effective and followed up conscientiously. Pupils' files are maintained well so that there are accurate records of the most vulnerable pupils' experiences.
- Staff are well trained on the signs of abuse and the most up-to-date guidance around safeguarding pupils. Staff have utter confidence in the work of the safeguarding leader, who always feeds back to them following their referrals. However, they are also clear that, if required, they pursue support until pupils' needs are met.
- Pupils receive wide-ranging opportunities to learn how to be safe, including through the PSHCE programme and assemblies. For example, pupils have learned about staying safe online and being safe in relationships with other people.
- Those pupils that inspectors met said that there are people they can speak to if they have any concerns. They are confident that adults would listen to them and take appropriate action.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **Good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, with some that is of very high quality. Teachers make good use of resources, including textbooks and classroom displays. They use their good subject knowledge to explain content and tasks to pupils clearly and enthuse them with interest in the topic.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils. They are keen for their classes to do well and constantly encourage them to try the more challenging work to reach higher standards.
- Teachers have established purposeful classroom routines which pupils follow without question and this enables lessons to progress smoothly and without interruption.
- Teachers know pupils' misconceptions and provide help to overcome them. For example, in a Year 11 science lesson, low-ability pupils were helped to understand why molecules have different melting points when the teacher used models to demonstrate the various structures. Pupils then showed the inspector how, as a result of the demonstration, they could now answer the questions about melting points correctly.
- Teachers ask questions that prompt pupils to think more about their answers and

explanations. In a Year 8 geography lesson, pupils were eager to use their prior knowledge about Venice to widen their discussion about the impact of tourist ships on the environment. The teacher skilfully used each pupil's answer to develop the debate around the room. Consequently, pupils developed a deeper understanding of the topic.

- Improving pupils' reading, writing and speaking skills is central to teaching across the school. Teachers give pupils extensive support and guidance on improving their writing skills, for example through giving reminders of key subject vocabulary that should be used. Strategies such as 'strive for five' are used as reminders to pupils of key features they should always have in their writing, such as correct spelling. Inspectors who heard pupils read reported that they were confident and interested in the texts they had been given. For example, Year 10 pupils were keen to discuss the use of language in 'A Christmas Carol' after reading it as a class.
- Pupils are encouraged to edit and improve their written responses in the light of feedback from the teacher or their peers in class. Events such as 'no pen days' provide opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and discussion skills. As a result, pupils are becoming more articulate and confident.
- Most teaching meets the needs of a range of pupils well. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported to ensure that their needs are identified and met in the classroom, including the use of well-trained additional adults.
- Disadvantaged pupils are given particular support, both in lessons and through interventions, to ensure that they make good progress from their starting points. High-ability pupils, including those that are disadvantaged, are supported well by challenging tasks that help them to think more deeply about the topic. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, most-able pupils were thoroughly engaged in trying to solve algebraic fractions after their teacher gave them more difficult problems to solve.
- Some teaching does not routinely ensure that middle-ability pupils are challenged to extend their answers or improve their written responses sufficiently. As a result, some of these pupils do not make as much progress as they should.
- Teachers' marking and feedback are thorough and often give strong guidance on how to improve writing skills. However, the feedback does not always give pupils enough guidance on how to make sustained improvement in the subject. Teachers do not always check that pupils have acted on advice given and tried to improve their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding
- Pupils develop into confident, articulate and enthusiastic young people who aspire to achieve the very best they can. They wear their uniform proudly and immaculately. They are extremely proud of their school and the opportunities it provides for them. They value the support of their teachers and staff and appreciate the improvements brought about by the principal.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe in school and within their community. Pupils discuss e-safety, fire safety, drugs awareness, healthy relationships and much more. Pupils say that they have confidence in the staff to deal with any issues that they take to them.
- Pupils also say that staff do not tolerate any form of discrimination or bullying. They

appreciate the new 'Toot Toot' text system for reporting bullying and say this shows how much the school values them as individuals.

- Pupils feel confident when they first arrive from primary school. Leaders ensure that pupils, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, get many opportunities to visit and get used to the school before the start of Year 7.
- The support for pupils from a variety of backgrounds, and for those facing particular experiences and challenges, is exemplary. The Bridge Unit provides exceptional care for pupils with emotional difficulties who might be at risk of exclusion. Careful support, utilising expertise from outside agencies, ensures that these pupils are able to stay in school and also access their lessons. As a result, they feel confident in making friends, taking part in lessons and aspiring to achieve well. Pupils who attend the Space Centre receive strong support as a result of carefully planned programmes of learning designed to meet individual needs. This helps them to make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils have excellent opportunities to express their views, especially during 'News Friday' tutor time, when they confidently debate issues such as the commercialisation of Christmas and the impact of the vote for Britain to leave the European Union. Others enjoy representing the school in the local community, for example during their community placements.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The school is a clean, tidy, litter-free and welcoming environment, awash with displays of pupils' work and boards that highlight the achievements of pupils, past and present.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is exceptional. They arrive promptly to lessons and settle to their work very quickly. As a result, learning proceeds quickly and without interruption. They listen to each other's views respectfully and give thoughtful feedback about what their classmates have to say.
- Pupils are polite and very welcoming to visitors, holding doors open for them as they walk around the school, eager to talk about what they enjoy. During lunch and breaktimes pupils mix together well and behave very sensibly. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds get on well together.
- Behaviour has improved since the last inspection. There are clear expectations for good behaviour that are understood by all. As a result, there have been no permanent exclusions over the last two years and fixed-term exclusions have reduced dramatically.
- The employment of an education welfare officer to work with families has had a very positive impact on improving attendance. As a result, attendance for all groups of pupils, including girls and those who are disadvantaged, has improved significantly and is now above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils enter the school with attainment that is significantly lower than the national average. In 2016, from these low starting points, pupils made progress in a range of subjects that was better than that of other pupils nationally. The percentage of pupils who achieved a good pass in English and mathematics has risen since the previous

inspection.

- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in a number of subjects and this is improving year on year. Their attainment, often from very low starting points, is improving. The differences between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally with the same starting points are diminishing over time.
- Many more disadvantaged pupils are now accessing academic post-16 pathways because they achieve better grades than ever before. Money is used well to provide timely interventions and additional tuition which allow pupils to achieve more.
- Pupils who receive additional support from Year 7 catch-up programmes make good progress and become much more confident in using their reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress overall, with some exceptional progress in mathematics. Their needs are accurately identified and funding is used appropriately to ensure that any additional support they require is put in place.
- In subjects such as mathematics, English literature, art, French, dance, drama and physical education, pupils achieved well in 2016. Results in vocational subjects, such as health and social care, hospitality and travel and tourism, were also strong.
- In 2015, science results showed underperformance. As a result of successful leadership, results in 2016 improved for those pupils sitting core and additional science.
- In 2016, achievement in other subjects, such as geography, business studies and graphics, was weaker at GCSE grades A* to C. School leaders are aware of this and have taken action to improve achievement through strengthening the leadership of these subjects. Current school information indicates that achievement in these subjects is on track to improve in 2017.
- The small number of most-able pupils in the school, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve well, with many gaining the top grades in the subjects they study.
- Despite swift improvements in many subject areas and for many pupils, middle-ability pupils are not yet consistently making rapid progress. This includes those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds. School leaders are already addressing this through regularly reviewing middle-ability pupils' progress and putting additional support in place for those who need it.
- Valuable careers advice and guidance, together with improved achievement, are securing better destinations for pupils when they leave school. The number of pupils who access higher-level post-16 qualifications is rising considerably, including those who are disadvantaged. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for their next stages in education, training or employment. In 2016, only one pupil who left Year 11 did not enter employment, education or training. Pupils attending the Space Centre are supported well to successfully move on to employment and training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The school has a small sixth form that admits students with a wide range of abilities. Some students join the sixth form to follow one-year courses before going on to colleges, while others follow two-year academic or vocational courses.
- Leadership of the sixth form is now good. The newly appointed head of sixth form has

high expectations for the students and has recently implemented changes that have improved the quality of education. He makes sure that all students receive advice and guidance to ensure that they embark on the most appropriate courses, based on their prior attainment and their career ambitions.

- Through the newly implemented regular checks on students' progress, the head of sixth form is able to ensure that students receive the support they need to make the progress they should in their learning.
- Teaching in the sixth form is improving and is now good in most subjects, especially science and vocational subjects. This is because school leaders have recently ensured that checks on sixth-form teaching are part of the school-wide system for evaluating teaching and learning, with action being taken when it is not good enough.
- Students have good relationships with each other and their teachers. Where learning is most effective, students receive close support from their teachers to ensure that they understand the work. They engage well in class discussions, considering the views of others and contributing their own ideas. For example, in a Year 12 travel and tourism lesson, students were confident in presenting their ideas to each other about the views of different stakeholders in tourist destinations.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not give students enough opportunities to improve their work by acting on their feedback.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. In 2016, students' progress across most subjects improved and was close to the national average in both academic and vocational courses.
- Due to the effective support that teachers give, the proportion of students who improve their grades in GCSE English and mathematics is rising. In 2016, the great majority of students who did not have a grade C or above in either GCSE English or mathematics improved their results by at least one grade. Current projections indicate that over half of students without GCSE grade C or above in English or mathematics will achieve this when they resit the examination.
- Teachers provide wide-ranging opportunities for students to secure their personal development and welfare, and to develop their understanding of life in modern Britain. They are able to take on positions of responsibility, for example becoming ambassadors for the school and mentors for younger pupils.
- Students know how to stay safe, including how to be safe online and how to live healthy lifestyles.
- Levels of attendance are above average. This is due to the head of sixth form's close monitoring of students' attendance and the targeted support students receive in choosing their courses
- Students receive effective careers advice and guidance during their time in the sixth form. All students benefit from work experience placements and this helps them prepare for their next steps. All but one student who completed their studies in 2016 progressed to appropriate higher-education institutions, apprenticeships, employment or training.
- The proportion of students who leave the sixth form during the academic year has reduced significantly. This is due to the improved advice, guidance and support that students now receive prior to arriving in the sixth form.

School details

Unique reference number	139063
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10019573

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	621
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	97
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Peter Bishop
Principal	Tim Croft
Telephone number	01623 980 055
Website	www.suttonacademy.atrust.org.uk
Email address	academy.office@suttonacademy.atrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- This is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- Since January 2013, the school has been sponsored by the Academy Transformation Trust.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding (pupil premium) is

well above the national average.

- The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups is smaller than average.
- The school works with one alternative provider, the Space Centre, which provides pupils with education off the school site.
- In 2015, the school met the current government floor standards for achievement at key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 parts of lessons, two tutor periods and a year meeting. Some lessons were observed jointly with the principal and other leaders. Inspectors listened to some pupils in key stages 3 and 4 read in their lessons and talked to them about their reading experience.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior leaders, middle leaders and representatives from the local governing body and the trust. Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including that related to safeguarding, achievement, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at the 39 parental responses on Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed the information from the 56 responses to Ofsted’s online survey of staff.
- Owing to a technical error, no pupils completed the Ofsted pupil questionnaire but inspectors spoke to a large proportion of pupils, both formally and informally. This included some of the most vulnerable pupils in the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ arrival at the school and their conduct at break and lunch, as well as between lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work pupils brought with them to show the inspectors when they met with them. They also looked at work in lessons.

Inspection team

Frances Le Pla, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Stevens	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Shepherd	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Tustian	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.

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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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 children looked after, 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/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.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016