

Sunnyside Spencer Academy

Great Hoggett Drive, Beeston, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG9 4HQ

Inspection dates

12–13 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, governors and sponsors have made a significant contribution to the school's improvement. They have transformed the quality of education provided for pupils. Pupils at all stages of their education achieve well and make good progress.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points because teaching in reading, writing and mathematics ensures that pupils acquire skills and knowledge effectively. The proportion of pupils reaching higher standards, especially in reading and subjects other than mathematics and English, is improving but is not yet secure.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress similar to that of others in the school and to others nationally. Leaders evaluate pupil premium funding rigorously and ensure that additional support is deployed astutely.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are considered carefully and they are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants.
- The majority of pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite and hardworking. The school is helping to improve the few whose behaviour, attendance or punctuality have been poor.
- Pupils enjoy reading because teachers promote a love of books throughout the curriculum. Pupils' confidence to read a range of texts is developed well because of the consistently good teaching of phonics.
- Leaders invest in the professional development of their staff extremely well. Teachers develop their skills through a wide range of opportunities both in and out of school. The culture of learning at all levels is strong.
- Monitoring and tracking systems are effective and coherent. They provide accurate information about the school's effectiveness.
- Pupils are prepared very well for each stage of their education. They are provided with a curriculum that is engaging and fun. Pupils learn how to be responsible citizens, develop sound moral values and celebrate diversity. New arrivals from other countries are warmly welcomed.
- Children in early years make good progress and are prepared well for Year 1. Leaders and other adults plan learning carefully. Children are happy and well cared for.
- The trust and the local governing body provide excellent support and challenge for school leaders. Parents and staff are highly supportive of school leadership.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils achieving a greater depth in skills, knowledge and understanding, especially in reading and in subjects other than English and mathematics (foundation subjects) in each year by:
 - embedding successful reading strategies to support pupils’ deeper understanding of different texts
 - refining the assessment systems to support foundation subjects so that teachers can plan more effectively for pupils to achieve at a greater depth.
- Further develop identified pupils’ attitudes to learning, including among children in the early years, so that they can be self-disciplined and work successfully with or without adult supervision.
- Strengthen the work with the few targeted pupils to improve their behaviour, levels of attendance and punctuality still further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The trust, leaders and managers have successfully navigated the school through a difficult journey since it became an academy. This entailed a move to a new building and establishing secure and stable leadership and staffing. The poor reputation the school had acquired locally in the past has now been largely eradicated. Trust leaders, governors and senior leaders have made a concerted effort to restore faith among the community. A trebling of the school roll since the school became an academy is testament to this work.
- The trust's leadership model of a head of school and executive headteacher has been successful. The two leaders work together seamlessly to provide excellent opportunities for teachers to grow in confidence and develop their skills. All teachers in the school understand their vision of a school where everyone is a learner and everyone is a leader. Under their leadership, the quality of teaching has significantly improved and pupils' performance has soared. Their impact has been marked and sustained. They enjoy a high level of support from teachers, staff and pupils.
- The leadership of teaching is strong and effective. Teachers develop their practice in a range of ways: through weekly 'teach-meet' sessions, where teachers share good practice, peer observations, teachers' access to educational literature (which has developed in-school focused research), visits to other schools and learning from the trust's specialist teachers who are known as 'academy angels'.
- Leaders have established well-understood and rigorous systems to monitor and track pupils' performance. Fortnightly 'RAG' meetings review the progress of every pupil. From this information, subject leaders devise 'rapid improvement plans' which have sharp success criteria. These plans have led to strong improvements in pupils' progress in all subjects.
- Leaders review the effectiveness of the support provided for vulnerable pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, extremely well. As a result, government funding for these groups is spent astutely. Leaders draw upon respected educational research nationally to develop their strategies further. Additional support, including from 'academy angels', and work with families have been effective in accelerating pupils' progress.
- Leaders have developed strong and effective assessment systems to support mathematics and English teaching. Teachers use these systems well to plan for pupils' progress. Teachers' assessments of pupils' performance are moderated rigorously and are accurate. Teachers' assessments of pupils' knowledge and skills in foundation subjects are developing well, although the criteria to demonstrate high standards are less clear.

- Subject leaders are effective. Their development plans, called 'rapid improvement plans', are derived from a deep understanding of pupils' weaknesses. They are relentless in ensuring that all pupils make the progress they should. Unvalidated results for key stage 1 and key stage 2 this year suggest that pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 have made much better progress and improved their attainment compared with previous years, especially in reading and writing. Mathematics continues to be a strength in the school. Children's achievements in early years continue to improve year on year.
- The school has developed a coherent system to promote positive behaviour. Pupils and staff follow this well. Pupils respond positively to adult instruction because they trust teachers to support them. A culture of mutual respect and understanding characterises most lessons. Teachers use praise and rewards to motivate pupils effectively. Teachers' work with some pupils whose behaviour, attendance and/or punctuality have been poor is largely successful. Leaders acknowledge that, for a few, more work is still to be done.
- The school's curriculum is well thought out and creative. It has contributed to pupils' high levels of engagement and their love of reading. The 'Shine' curriculum builds on notions of success, happiness, independence and enrichment. Pupils enjoy reading the chosen class novels and learn about a range of topics related to the story. For example, in key stage 2, pupils studied 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' and also learned about Germany and the Holocaust. The challenging nature of the text was no barrier to pupils' enjoyment and interest in the book because teachers make learning accessible.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which contribute well to pupils' development. Pupils enjoy clubs, such as those for coding, dance, nature, cricket and tennis. Many clubs are the result of the effective use of the primary school physical education and sport funding. Increasing numbers of pupils take part in sport. The school has been highly successful in regional school games competitions such as cross-country and athletics. A specialist coach develops teachers' confidence and skills in delivering physical education activities. The coach also leads activities for pupils in the 'wake and shake' breakfast club and the after-school 'learning zone'.
- Leaders are committed to developing all pupils' wider skills and values. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are developed well throughout the curriculum. During pupils' personal, social and health (PSH) education lessons, called 'Go Givers', pupils learn about world religions, how to keep safe and how to be responsible citizens. Pupils are tolerant of differences, understand the main features of other religions that make up modern Britain and welcome new arrivals into the family of the school. As such, pupils develop a sound appreciation of British values and are prepared well for life in modern society.
- Leaders develop pupils' leadership skills extremely well. Leaders ensure that their vision of 'everyone a leader' is realised among pupils. A remarkable number of leadership opportunities are open to all pupils, giving them the chance to take responsibility and gain confidence. These include, for example, positions as eco-warriors, e-cadets, writing leaders, punctuation champions and sports leaders.

- The Spencer Academies Trust has added value to the quality of education provided by this school. Its strategic vision of providing outstanding education in all its schools is well understood and relentlessly pursued by all leaders in Sunnyside Academy. Trust leaders have made astute appointments at senior leadership level, which has accelerated improvement in the school. The wide range of subject specialists and national leaders available to the trust through its network of schools, the teaching school alliance and the school-centred initial teacher training provision have strongly benefited teachers' and leaders' development. The trust monitors the school's progress rigorously. The use of 'challenge partners', comprising a team of key leaders in the trust, to review the school's effectiveness provides leaders and governors with a valuable external evaluation of the school.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body is made up of experienced and knowledgeable governors. The chair of governors is particularly experienced in financial matters. Government funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is closely monitored.
- The governance structures have ensured that the school's effectiveness is checked on a regular basis. For example, the school effectiveness committee interrogates the school's performance information and triangulates this information with external reviews and its own visits to the school. The governors' visit schedule is closely aligned to the school improvement plan, so that the monitoring activities are relevant and purposeful.
- Governors have been particularly successful in changing the perception of the school in the local community. Parents are positive about the school and trust that any concerns they may have will be treated seriously.
- The school's quality assurance systems have been refined and the information derived from them has been improved so that governors receive useful and meaningful information about the school's progress. Governors are therefore clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors have challenged school leaders to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, their progress has improved year on year compared with that of others in school and nationally.
- Governors are diligent in ensuring that their own skills are updated and improved. The trust has provided effective training for governors, especially in relation to understanding the new assessment framework and the latest national curriculum.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong culture of safeguarding permeates the school. All staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. Their training is regular and comprehensive. Safeguarding updates during staff meetings ensure that staff are made aware of developments in any child protection issues in the school.

- The designated safeguarding leader (DSL) is the head of school and she is supported well by the deputy safeguarding leader, who is the school's 'family liaison champion'. Between them, they have ensured that safeguarding arrangements and policies are robust and effective. They keep meticulous records to track the support provided for each child at risk of harm.
- The DSL has ensured that the school's curriculum supports safeguarding well. Regular sessions during PSH education lessons help to protect pupils in an age-appropriate way. Pupils have received visits from local professionals, including the NSPCC and the police. Pupils are encouraged to respect one another and be tolerant of differences. They understand the rule of law and democratic systems, such as elections. They often engage in debates and discussions about current issues in the news. In this way, the school is helping to prevent pupils from being drawn towards extremist views.
- Pupils, parents and staff agree that pupils are safe and well cared for. Bullying is rare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good and continues to improve. This is because all teachers strive to make their classroom practice effective through learning from others and the latest research. This culture of learning, promoted by school leaders, has been pivotal in ensuring that pupils receive high-quality teaching.
- Teaching is effective. The teachers' 'toolkit' identifies in lesson plans how pupils will demonstrate progress. Teachers' greater emphasis over the past year to develop pupils' greater depth of knowledge and skills in English and mathematics, at both key stages 1 and 2, has contributed to increased proportions of pupils reaching the higher standards, especially in reading and writing this year.
- Teachers plan lessons well, use a range of imaginative resources and have good subject knowledge. As a result, current pupils are making good progress, especially in English and mathematics. Teachers make sure that, for the large majority of the time, pupils enjoy their work and remain engaged in their tasks. During interviews, pupils said that they loved school and one commented, 'learning is fun'.
- In mathematics, teaching has been consistently successful across the school because teachers have employed strategies that allow pupils to access mathematical concepts in a variety of ways. Pupils can use visual representations and practical tools to work out calculations. Teachers encourage strong mental arithmetic through daily practice and quizzes. As a result, pupils are able to tackle more complex problems quickly. Teachers encourage good reasoning skills; pupils talk through and then write their explanations before they record their final answers.
- Teachers have developed successful strategies to promote pupils' writing skills. The use of a central novel to inspire pupils to write creatively is particularly effective. Pupils demonstrate an increased confidence and enjoyment in writing as they progress through the school. Teachers emphasise pupils' technical accuracy in writing and this has resulted in good outcomes in writing and spelling, punctuation and grammar tests.

- Teachers promote reading for pleasure. Pupils are encouraged to read at home and read a range of types of literature, including fiction and non-fiction. One girl remarked that she was excited to go shopping in the supermarket so that she could buy the class reading book for herself. Pupils' reading skills become increasingly confident as they get older. They are equipped with effective skills and strategies to decode unfamiliar words. Teachers' work to develop pupils' reading skills further, so that pupils can interpret texts and understand an author's intentions more effectively, is becoming more successful, especially at key stage 2. Teachers recognise that some aspects of pupils' comprehension skills require further development to ensure that they can fully appreciate what they are reading and reach higher standards in reading.
- Most lessons are characterised by mutual respect and cooperation. Teachers use praise effectively in class and reward pupils for positive contributions. Pupils who find learning in class challenging are gently and successfully supported by teachers and support assistants.
- Teachers across the school deliver their lessons in a consistent manner and strictly adhere to school policies. In this way, pupils' transition to the next class is smooth.
- Teachers are skilled at teaching phonics. Pupils are confident in reading unfamiliar words using their phonetic knowledge. These skills have provided a good foundation for pupils to explore different books.
- Teachers encourage pupils' reading and writing skills in a range of subjects other than English and mathematics. Teachers use a clear assessment system to judge pupils' specific subject achievements. However, teachers do not always provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to demonstrate a deep understanding of different subjects. The assessment criteria to demonstrate the higher standards of achievement are not always clear. While most pupils reach expected standards for their age in a range of foundation subjects, few exceed them.
- Teachers take regular opportunities to develop the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of what they teach. The current whole-school reading book, for example, used during the school's transition weeks and called 'Only One You', is used effectively to draw out themes of diversity and tolerance.
- Newly qualified teachers teach with confidence; they are an asset to the school's teaching workforce. They are supported well and make use of learning opportunities to develop their skills further.
- Class teachers make good use of teaching assistants. They contribute to teaching well and often demonstrate good questioning skills to check pupils' responses and explore their thinking. Teachers and teaching assistants have ensured that pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported effectively.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils are confident, friendly and articulate. They appreciate the support the staff provide for them and get involved in school life whenever they can.
- Pupils are welcoming to visitors and new arrivals to the school. They celebrate differences and enjoy learning about other cultures, lifestyles and religions during PSH education lessons. Pupils show mature attitudes towards difficult topics. They held a minute's silence to mark the tragic events of the Manchester terrorist attack. Older pupils discuss events such as these with their teachers because they are encouraged to develop a global understanding of the world around them.
- All pupils undertake at least one leadership role during each school year. Pupils are proud of their different positions. Governors, teachers and parents report that the e-cadets demonstrated excellent speaking skills during a presentation to parents and national groups. Pupil learning leaders provide feedback to teachers that has helped to drive improvements in teaching. Pupils' views are respected and acted upon.
- Pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular clubs. Attendance for these opportunities is high. Pupils enjoy sporting activities. Pupils have received medals in many local competitions.
- The school has worked hard to develop pupils' aspirations. Pupils and parents have participated in visits to Nottingham University. Pupils have received science awards and listened to visitors from a range of professions.
- Pupils understand how to keep safe, especially online. They trust that adults will look after them and listen to their concerns.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave sensibly around the school. Incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are rare. Pupils enjoy getting involved in the activities set up by the sports coach and pupil sports leaders at break- and lunchtimes. Any disputes during play are resolved quickly.
- The vast majority of pupils behave sensibly and work positively in class. Pupils and parents agree that behaviour is generally very good. A small minority of pupils, especially those arriving mid-term, display challenging learning behaviours; they find it hard to listen, settle and cooperate.
- Pupils' attendance at school has significantly improved over the last two years. Specifically, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities attending school regularly is increasing. A small minority remain persistently absent from school. Work to improve their attendance is ongoing.
- Most pupils arrive to school on time and ready to learn. Leaders continue to work with the few families who find it difficult to ensure that their children come to school on time.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- By the end of key stage 2, pupils make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their different starting points. Pupils' progress in mathematics continues to be significantly above national averages.
- Pupils' attainment across all subjects at the end of key stage 2 is at or above national averages. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is consistently above national averages. The proportion of pupils reaching higher standards in reading and writing was low in 2016, except for mathematics.
- Current unconfirmed, though moderated, test results for the end of key stage 2 suggest that the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching expected and higher standards has significantly increased, especially in reading and writing. The school's work to encourage pupils to work at greater depth has been effective.
- At key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading and writing has been inconsistent. This year, however, unvalidated test results show a marked increase in pupils' attainment. Most pupils from different starting points reach expected standards. The proportion achieving greater depth in English and mathematics is improving quickly.
- Most pupils reach the expected standard in the phonics screening checks. Low-ability pupils make rapid progress because of the effective support and phonics programme taught. Older pupils read fluently and pupils across the school love reading.
- Disadvantaged pupils make just as much progress as others in a range of subjects. In some subjects such as mathematics, their attainment exceeds that of others in school and nationally.
- Pupils in all year groups make good progress. Pupils who fall behind quickly catch up because monitoring systems identify them early and the support provided for them is so effective.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities often make as much progress as those with similar starting points. Others who do not receive specialist support are improving their progress.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. This is because their skills and aptitudes are assessed accurately. Also, teachers take great care in ensuring that these pupils settle well and make friends.
- Although current pupils make good progress in English across almost all year groups, their comprehension skills are not always secure. This has hindered some pupils' ability to reach the higher standards in reading at both key stages 1 and 2. New reading strategies have been introduced and are starting to make a difference to pupils' deeper understanding of the texts they read.

- Pupils' progress in subjects other than mathematics and English is monitored carefully. Teachers encourage the development of specific subject knowledge and skills, although few pupils reach high standards in each subject according to the school's own assessment framework. For example, although pupils regularly carry out experiments in science, they do not practise their skills of evaluation and hypothesis sufficiently. Also, pupils' work in history promotes pupils' understanding of facts and chronology but does not encourage pupils to interrogate sources as well as it could. These skills would deepen their historical understanding.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader has ensured that the provision for children in Reception has improved year on year. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development this year and last year has been at or above national averages. This represents good progress from children's low starting points. During the recent temporary absence of the leader, an 'academy angel' has ably led and managed the area.
- The learning environment in early years is vibrant and stimulating. The resources are well thought out and based on a careful assessment of the children's needs. The outdoor area allows children to play imaginatively and to develop physically, with a selection of equipment that children use to climb and balance.
- The early years leader has cultivated a good relationship with parents to ensure that children's progress in learning is shared and opportunities for further development are discussed. Children settle in well because there is good liaison with all pre-school settings prior to children joining the school.
- Children develop a love of stories and learn basic phonic skills well because teachers are skilled at teaching phonics. These skills prompt children to write. Inspectors observed young children excitedly choosing to hold a pen and attempting to write on postcards about the book the class was reading. Some children can write sentences and read basic words confidently by the end of Reception.
- Disadvantaged children are supported well and make good progress from their starting points. Any barriers to learning are addressed effectively and staff work well with families to help accelerate children's progress.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are knowledgeable about signs of abuse and keep children safe. There are no breaches of the statutory welfare requirements. Children behave well and they show that they feel safe in the trusting relationships they have with adults in the setting.
- The vast majority of children are prepared well for Year 1. Their readiness to learn is developed well by teachers. Children listen to adult instruction well. However, some children find it difficult to concentrate on their work without adult supervision.

School details

Unique reference number	140613
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10031129

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The Spencer Academies Trust
Chair	Miss Dianne Raynor
Executive Headteacher/ Head of School	Mrs Angela O'Brien/ Miss Shamara Wilson
Telephone number	0115 9174310
Website	www.sunnyside.notts.sch.uk
Email address	office@sunnysidespenceracademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

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.
- Inspectors observed learning in all classes in the school. Most observations were carried out with senior leaders.
- Pupils' work in all year groups and subjects was examined alongside senior leaders.
- A range of documents was carefully scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, information on the current progress made by pupils, minutes of governing body meetings, records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to how pupils are supported in keeping safe.

- Meetings were held with pupils in key stages 1 and 2. Children in early years were spoken with during observations. Pupils' behaviour was observed by inspectors during break- and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the head of school and executive headteacher, representatives of the governing body and the trust and other senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors evaluated 15 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 10 responses to its free-text service. In addition, inspectors evaluated 23 responses to the staff survey. No pupils responded to the pupil survey due to technical difficulties. Inspectors evaluated the school's own survey results for both parents and pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The number of pupils on roll has significantly increased since the school opened.
- The school gained academy status in May 2014 and is sponsored by The Spencer Academies Trust.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. One pupil is in receipt of an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English an additional language is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils joining the school during the school year is higher than the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club called 'wake and shake' and an after-school club called 'learning zone'.
- The school moved to a new building in January 2017.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Inspection team

Zarina Connolly, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Claire Stylianides

Ofsted Inspector

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