

# Inspection of a good school: Nottingham Girls' Academy

Robin's Wood Road, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG8 3LD

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Inspection dates:

7 and 8 December 2021

## Outcome

Nottingham Girls' Academy continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if the inspectors were to carry out a section 5 inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

This is an inclusive, popular and thriving school. It serves a diverse community. Pupils achieve well, including in English and performing arts. Academic performance in the sixth form has strengthened. One sixth-former said: 'Moving to this school was one of the best decisions I have ever made.' Pupils get on well. They have high levels of respect for one another. Instances of poor behaviour and bullying are rare. Pupils say that when they do occur, staff are quick to resolve them. During a fire alarm evacuation, pupils' conduct was exemplary.

Expectations are high. The curriculum is broad and expanding. The wide range of subjects offered by the school meets pupils' interests and aspirations. Partnerships with local businesses promote careers for girls, including in computer science. Staff support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those who speak English as an additional language, effectively.

Pupils' personal development is a strong feature of this school. Pupils enjoy accepting responsibility. Prefects help to support the school's expectations. Many pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They enthuse about the school production of 'Shrek'. Leaders care about pupils' well-being and their readiness for life in modern Britain.

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

Leaders, supported by the trust, have an ambitious vision for the school. They know the school well. Throughout the pandemic, leaders have ensured that the school has continued to improve. The morale of the large majority of staff is positive. A culture of high expectation connects all aspects of school life. Staff know this as the 'NGA Way'. They value opportunities for professional learning. Leaders link these to their improvement priorities.

Leaders have enhanced the curriculum. The subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate lie at the heart of the curriculum. The proportion of pupils studying these subjects is rising. Subject leaders have ensured that curriculum plans identify the knowledge pupils need to learn and when. In many subjects, including dance, these plans go beyond what the national curriculum requires. Leaders are committed to expanding subject choices for older pupils. They have introduced computer science to all year groups. In key stages 4 and 5, pupils study a blend of academic and vocational courses. Popular courses include sociology and criminology, for example.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use this well to question pupils, to check their understanding and to identify any misconceptions. They set pupils challenging work and provide support when it is needed. Pupils understand how the school's 'learning journeys' and 'learning challenges' help them to remember more. Pupils' achievement, particularly in academic courses, continues to strengthen.

In the sixth form, teachers show students precisely how they can apply the knowledge they have gained to achieve well. In other year groups, this practice is not always consistent. Pupils are not always confident in understanding how to apply their knowledge. This is particularly the case when they learn complex knowledge, including knowledge that goes beyond the national curriculum. This has not been helped by the impact of the pandemic.

Pupils with SEND get the extra help they need to study the same curriculum as others. Pupils who are at an early stage of reading, and disadvantaged pupils, are well supported. Staff use tutor time well to reinforce key skills, such as literacy and numeracy.

The school's systems for pastoral care are strong. Pupils feel well cared for. Levels of attendance have recovered quickly following national restrictions due to the pandemic. The school environment is calm and orderly. Disruption to learning is rare. Leaders ensure that they look after pupils with protected characteristics well. A group for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils (LGBT+), for example, is further raising awareness of diversity.

The curriculum for personal development is strong across all year groups. Pupils understand the importance of British values, respectful relationships and consent. They enjoy the varied opportunities to discuss topical issues. Subject leaders have carefully considered how the curriculum in their subjects can promote pupils' moral and cultural development. Leaders have selected subject-related resources and topics that help to celebrate diversity, for example. In English, pupils in key stage 3 study literature which explores female role models. In geography, pupils learn about the 'fantastic places and spaces' beyond where they live.

Leaders have designed the school's 'BUILD' programme to promote pupils' character. Pupils receive rewards for developing personal qualities such as respect, resilience and responsibility. Pupils value the opportunities that they receive to prepare for life in modern Britain.

All pupils receive high-quality careers advice and guidance. They are well informed about the different options available to them. The school's 'build employment experiences' allow pupils to consider future option choices. For example, in key stage 4, pupils can gain practical experience of construction.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture of vigilance. They know the local safeguarding risks, including child criminal exploitation. Pupils learn about these risks through their personal development programme. Leaders have ensured that pupils know about the support available in cases of self-harm. Pupils say that they feel safe. They know the adults they can talk to if they have any worries. This includes access to a trained counsellor.

Leaders understand the needs of vulnerable pupils. They take swift action when required to protect them from harm. Record-keeping is thorough. Leaders work with external agencies well, including health services and social care.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Sometimes, despite the demanding work that is set, pupils are not always confident in applying the knowledge they have gained to complete tasks set by teachers. When this is the case, pupils occasionally produce work that does not meet teachers' high expectations. Teachers should ensure that pupils understand how to apply their knowledge before moving on, so that pupils can remember more of the challenging subject content they are taught.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2016.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137184
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200306
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	871
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	84
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mike Hamlin
<b>Principal</b>	David Tungate
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.nottinghamgirlsacademy.org/">www.nottinghamgirlsacademy.org/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school is part of the Greenwood Academies Trust, which it joined in 2011.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was using five providers for off-site alternative provision. Three of these providers are unregistered with the Department for Education.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the principal and other members of the senior leadership team. Meetings were also held with subject leaders and the director of the sixth form. Additional meetings took place with the coordinators for pupils with SEND and for pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- A meeting was held with three representatives from the trust, including the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils, formally and informally, around the school site and across all key stages.
- To check the school's arrangements for safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the trust's and school's designated leaders for safeguarding. An additional meeting was held with the designated teacher with oversight of children in the care of the local authority. Inspectors checked the school's arrangements for those pupils attending off-site alternative provision.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including policies and record-keeping for behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in English, geography and science. In each subject, inspectors visited lessons, scrutinised the work in pupils' books and held discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. Inspectors also made visits to morning tutor-time sessions.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. Responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff were also reviewed.

## Inspection team

Chris Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Shazia Lydon

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Swales

Ofsted Inspector

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