

# Inspection of Sutton Community Academy

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

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Inspection dates: 26 and 27 April 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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|---------------------------|-------------|
| The quality of education  | <b>Good</b> |
| Behaviour and attitudes   | <b>Good</b> |
| Personal development      | <b>Good</b> |
| Leadership and management | <b>Good</b> |
| Sixth-form provision      | <b>Good</b> |
| Previous inspection grade | Inadequate  |

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Sutton Community Academy is a much-improved school that sits proudly at the heart of its local community. Pupils and parents and carers are optimistic about the positive changes that have taken place. Pupils appreciate learning in an environment where everyone wants them to do well. One pupil spoke for many when saying that the school is 'way better than it used to be'.

The school is inclusive. Pupils are well supported. Most pupils show respect to others and conduct themselves appropriately. Staff deal with lesson disruptions swiftly, meaning that pupils can continue to learn. Pupils say that staff are fair and respond to incidents of poor behaviour consistently. A small number of pupils receive effective support from staff to improve their behaviour.

Leaders take incidents of bullying seriously. Pupils readily share any worries they have with staff, for example through the school's online referral system, 'Fearless'. Staff act promptly to resolve pupils' concerns. Most parents agree that this is the case.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Some pupils are excited about a planned expedition to Everest Base Camp next year. Pupils enjoy tracking their own accomplishments as part of the 'Sutton Pledge'. They are well informed about future opportunities for education, training and employment.

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

Leaders' relentless determination to improve the school has paid off. They work closely with trust leaders to identify priorities and bring about the necessary changes. Leaders have created an ambitious school culture. Staff have high aspirations for what pupils can achieve. Most pupils are motivated and want to do well. As one parent explained, 'Leaders understand where the pupils come from. They allow pupils to see that their horizons are wider than the local area.'

Leaders have enriched the curriculum offer since the previous inspection. Key stage 3 pupils spend more time studying a broad variety of subjects in sufficient depth. Almost all pupils in key stages 3 and 4 now learn a modern foreign language (MFL). Sixth-form students study a wide range of academic and vocational courses. This includes those offered by the trust's nearby college.

Curriculum leaders have done a lot of work to improve the quality of education. In most subjects, they have identified what they want pupils to know and in what order. Well-developed curriculums in English, mathematics, history and physical education (PE) help pupils to secure their knowledge and skills. Leaders are well on the way to developing the curriculum in MFL.

Teachers take pride in their subject-specialist knowledge. They value the training available through the trust to enhance their practice. Teachers ask challenging

questions to check pupils' understanding. A new approach to providing pupils with feedback is not used consistently well by teachers, however. Inaccuracies and misunderstandings in pupils' written work are sometimes ignored. Pupils do not always know how they can get better at a subject.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders identify these pupils' needs accurately. Some teachers do not use information about these pupils well enough when planning or adapting the curriculum. Many parents commented positively about how the provision for pupils with SEND has improved.

Teachers read regularly with pupils during tutor time. Chosen texts are varied and complement the English curriculum. Some teachers are not as skilled as others at engaging pupils with this programme. Pupils who need help with their reading are getting the support they need. These pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy.

Pupils' attendance has been affected repeatedly by COVID-19. Effective support by leaders is improving attendance. However, too many pupils are regularly absent. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. The numbers of pupils removed from lessons or excluded from school temporarily are declining.

Students enjoy studying in the sixth form. They value their established relationships with supportive staff. They learn age-appropriate ways to stay safe through a well-planned life skills programme. Most of these students aim to attend university or to secure higher level apprenticeships.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development well. Pupils know how to look after their physical and mental health. They learn about potential risks in their local community. Relationships and sex education is detailed. The careers programme is of a high quality. The curriculum does not cover British values explicitly enough.

Senior leaders are mindful of staff's welfare and well-being. Most staff feel valued.

Significant investment by the trust is funding improvements to the school's environment. Trust officers, and those responsible for governance, have been key in supporting the school to improve. They are ambitious for how the school can continue to get better.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Safeguarding leaders are knowledgeable. They monitor vulnerable pupils closely and ensure that they get the help they need quickly, including from external agencies.

Staff understand and fulfil their duties to safeguard pupils. Leaders remind staff regularly about local safeguarding risks. Staff know how to recognise and report potential concerns about pupils, including in relation to harmful sexual behaviour.

Pupils learn how to spot potential risks to their safety. They are confident that staff will take concerns about their safety seriously and act in their best interests.

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

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

- Some teachers do not consider the needs of pupils with SEND well enough when planning the curriculum. When the curriculum is not adapted carefully enough, these pupils are not able to build their knowledge and skills successfully over time. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of checking that there is consistency across all subjects in how the curriculum meets the needs of pupils with SEND. For example, leaders have made sure that the needs of these pupils are identified accurately to help inform curriculum planning. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum caters for the needs of pupils with SEND, so that these pupils acquire the knowledge they need to achieve well.
- The school's strategy to provide pupils with feedback on their written work is not implemented consistently well. Not all staff identify and address errors and misconceptions in pupils' work. This leaves some pupils with misunderstandings and gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should review their approach to providing pupils with feedback to ensure that errors and misconceptions are identified correctly, to help pupils know and remember more over time.
- The curriculum in French is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in Years 9, 10 and 11. Gaps in pupils' knowledge of phonics, grammar or vocabulary in these years are not mapped out sufficiently well. It is not fully clear what these pupils should learn and when to build their knowledge of French over time. Leaders' work to review and plan the French curriculum should be completed rapidly, so that pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 can be successful in learning this subject.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. These pupils miss out on learning important knowledge and on experiences to support their wider personal development. Leaders should continue to develop strategies to support all pupils to attend regularly.

## **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

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|---|--|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>                    | 139063   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                            | Nottinghamshire County Council   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                          | 10227393   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                             | Secondary comprehensive  |
| <b>School category</b>                            | Academy sponsor-led  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                        | 11 to 18   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                           | Mixed  |
| <b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>        | 744  |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b> | 45   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                      | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                             | Pat Beanland   |
| <b>Principal</b>                                  | Patrick Butterell  |
| <b>Website</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.suttonacademy.atrust.org.uk">www.suttonacademy.atrust.org.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                | 4 March 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                              |

## Information about this school

- The principal and members of the senior leadership team joined the school in January 2021.
- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) took up the role in September 2020. A new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) joined the school the following year in July 2021.
- A new chair of the board of trustees of Academy Transformation Trust was appointed in May 2021. The interim chief executive officer of the trust was appointed in October 2021.
- The chair of the local governing board took up the position in March 2021. All other governors on the board have joined since this time.
- The number of pupils on the school's roll has increased this academic year.

- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers and three registered alternative providers.
- 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**

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

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspectors met with the principal, senior school leaders and senior trust representatives. They also met with other school leaders, including the SENCo.
- The lead inspector met remotely with the chair of the board of Academy Transformation Trust, the interim chief executive office of the trust and the chair of the local governing board.
- Inspectors did deep dives in five subjects: English, mathematics, history, PE and MFL. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, met with the teachers of the lessons visited, spoke to some pupils about their learning (including pupils with SEND) and looked at samples of pupils' work. On the second day of the inspection, inspectors examined the curriculum in a wider range of subjects and reviewed a sample of workbooks from pupils with SEND. Inspectors spoke with some pupils about reading and listened to them read with a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from a range of different year groups, including sixth-form students and pupils with SEND. They spoke with pupils informally and observed the behaviour of pupils during social times.
- Inspectors spoke with two representatives of the alternative providers used by the school on the telephone.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks, holding discussions with the DSL, staff and pupils, and reviewing documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took note of the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the results of the Ofsted staff survey. There were no responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan. They considered information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and exclusions, and the wider curriculum.

## **Inspection team**

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ellenor Beighton

Ofsted Inspector

Jayne Ashman

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Stonier

Her Majesty's Inspector



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