

Inspection of Sutton Grammar School

Manor Lane, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4AS

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Sutton Grammar School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including those in the sixth form, thrive at Sutton Grammar School. Pupils are enthusiastic learners who work hard and achieve well. Staff are very ambitious for their pupils and expect them to do well. Pupils are happy and safe. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the education their children receive.

Pupils are very proud to attend this diverse and welcoming school. Pupils embrace difference and celebrate the rights and opinions of others. They leave the school as well-rounded, independent and ambitious young adults.

In lessons, pupils have positive attitudes to their studies and they behave exceptionally well. They are respectful of their teachers and one another. Outside of lessons, pupils enjoy each other's company, interacting with maturity and good humour. Bullying is rare and pupils say that leaders quickly respond to any concerns raised.

Leaders have ensured that pupils have access to an impressive range of extra-curricular opportunities. Participation is very important to the school, and pupils in all year groups are eager to take on leadership roles. They take pride in serving their community.

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

Leaders have established a culture of high achievement, respect and participation. All leaders and staff have a shared ambition for pupils attending the school. Pupils perform very well across the curriculum. They enter the school with strong reading skills. Reading is promoted across the curriculum.

Leaders' curriculum thinking and subject expertise are a strength. The curriculum is ambitious, coherently planned and well sequenced. Subject leaders have thought carefully about what teachers teach, and when. For example, in science, pupils learn about energy and forces and this knowledge is developed through exploring gravity and forces in space. Teachers understand the importance of returning to topics previously taught. This helps pupils to apply their learning to more challenging content.

Pupils are very positive about their experiences at school. They say that strong relationships exist between pupils and staff. Pupils arrive at lessons focused and eager to learn. They display high levels of self-control. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do very well at the school. Leaders have ensured that learning is well matched to their needs.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use questioning well in many subjects to check for understanding. However, pupils' learning across the curriculum is not reviewed systematically. In some subjects, pupils' work was disorganised and

showed a lack of care, which was not addressed by staff. This is because the school's approach to assessment and feedback is not clear to staff or pupils. Sometimes, teachers and pupils do not know what aspects of learning have been well understood and what needs to be revisited.

Leaders have placed an emphasis on personal development across the school. They have created a detailed and well-planned programme that develops pupils' understanding of the wider world. Pupils are very positive about these lessons and the range of specialist support available to them through the pastoral teams. Pupils enjoy and appreciate the many extra-curricular opportunities available to them. Careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is not as well developed because the school does not provide information about the full breadth of opportunities to all pupils in Years 8 and 9. Therefore the school does not meet the requirements of the Baker Clause. Sixth-form students are concerned that CEIAG is biased towards science, technology and mathematics subjects.

Pupils are keen to develop their leadership skills and take pride in doing so. Pupils make a positive and significant contribution to the wider school. Sixth-form students enjoy being role models for younger pupils. Sixth-form students are involved in leading many clubs, including editing student publications.

Leaders, including governors, know their school well. They are proud of their staff and pupils. Leaders understand the many strengths of the school and are already working on the areas they have identified as priorities for further improvement. For example, leaders have strengthened the quality of the curriculum and are now working to improve assessment and feedback. Staff told the inspectors that they are proud of the school and its leadership, and that it is a very happy place to work. Staff appreciate the training and development they receive. Leaders prioritise staff well-being and workload. Staff, including those new to teaching, told us that they are well supported by leaders across the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Highly organised systems ensure that a skilled team of staff, including governors, respond swiftly and effectively to any concerns. This ensures that pupils and staff are kept safe.

Staff are provided with regular, high-quality training and information which help them to respond appropriately to concerns raised. Safeguarding records show that leaders support vulnerable pupils well. Leaders work closely with external agencies so that staff and pupils are provided with expert and timely guidance when required.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' approach to assessment is not fully understood by teachers or pupils. Consequently, sometimes teachers do not understand how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. Leaders must ensure that the use of assessment and feedback is consistent, understood and strengthens learning.
- CEIAG is mainly focused on science, technology and mathematics-based career routes. This means that pupils do not get equal opportunity to explore the full range of careers open to them. Leaders should strengthen the provision for all pupils, including meeting the requirements of the Baker Clause.

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

Unique reference number	136787
Local authority	Sutton
Inspection number	10242397
Type of school	Secondary Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1034
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	355
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Robert W Murrill
Headteacher	Ben Cloves
Website	http://www.suttongrammar.sutton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Sutton Grammar School converted to become an academy school in May 2011. When its predecessor school, Sutton Grammar School for Boys, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- In recent years, girls have been admitted into the sixth form.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special education needs coordinator, subject leaders, teachers and members of the support staff.
- An inspector met with representatives of the governing body. Inspectors also scrutinised the minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Inspectors also spoke with an independent adviser to the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: history, modern foreign languages, drama, science and English. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited some lessons, spoke with pupils and teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered other curriculum areas, including art and design, music and geography.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader and other staff responsible for safeguarding. They considered a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding, including leaders' pre-employment checks on staff. Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils about aspects of safeguarding. They also considered survey responses from staff, parents and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors examined other documents, including the whole-school priorities and school's self-evaluation summary.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes, in corridors, during registration and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of their behaviour. Inspectors discussed pupils' programme of wider personal development.
- Inspectors reviewed 201 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. These included 104 responses via the free-text facility. Inspectors also considered a letter from a parent.
- Inspectors also considered 355 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire and 69 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Sophie Cavanagh, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Umbar Sharif	Ofsted Inspector
Joseph Sparks	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Rawstone	Her Majesty's Inspector

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