

Inspection of Nottingham University Academy of Science and Technology

93 Abbey Street, Dunkirk, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG7 2PL

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2022

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Sixth-form provision | Outstanding |
| Previous inspection grade | Good |

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that they are safe and happy at school. They are very well cared for. Typically, a younger pupil commented, 'Pupils feel safe and have lots of wonderful staff to help them out.' Pupils appreciate the distinctiveness of the school with its strong focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Staff have high expectations of pupils. Most pupils behave well. The school is calm and focused. Relationships are polite and respectful. Pupils engage well in lessons. Pupils and staff value the school's new behaviour policy, which has improved conduct and attitudes. Pupils say that there is some bullying. They are confident that adults deal with it effectively when it occurs.

Sixth-form students benefit from an exceptional provision. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive. One typically commented, 'All credit to the remarkable teaching staff and the school as a whole for providing such a strong foundation of education and discipline.' Students gain from a range of opportunities. A student who expressed a view typical of those of others said, 'It's a funky family – everyone is accepted and cared for, and it is a comfortable place to be.'

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that reflects the school's values. They provide pupils with a range of subjects, including Spanish, music and art. They enable pupils to specialise in different aspects of engineering and science as they move through the school. Many more pupils choose to follow the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects at key stage 4 than previously. This curriculum prepares pupils well for further academic, vocational and applied learning in the sixth form and beyond. Leaders have created a high-quality curriculum for sixth-form students.

Leaders have developed subject curriculums that build pupils' knowledge and skills over time. For example, pupils become increasingly capable in their knowledge and application of mathematics. Teachers support and challenge pupils to revisit and build on previous learning each term and from one year to the next. Pupils know more and remember more over time.

Teachers skilfully check what pupils know and can do. They identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. They adapt their teaching to make sure that pupils embed their learning. Pupils appreciate this and respond well. In the sixth form, teachers expertly support students to meet demanding goals. Teachers refine their teaching through regular and well-planned training.

Leaders are developing a culture of reading. For example, sixth-form students are trained to be 'reading buddies' with younger pupils. Leaders have made the English curriculum more ambitious by including key literature. However, some pupils do not yet access the support they need to become fluent readers.

Leaders are embedding ways to identify and assess pupils' needs. Teachers support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to build their learning over time. Leaders access external professionals to provide specialist support when needed. Provision for sixth-form students with SEND is strong. Many parents commented positively about the provision for pupils with SEND. However, a minority of parents disagree. Leaders have not yet ensured that provision for pupils with SEND is as strong as it should be for younger pupils.

Attendance in the sixth form has improved. In the rest of the school, attendance is improving. However, too many pupils are still regularly absent.

Pupils gain from a range of experiences that support their spiritual and moral development. For example, they learn about different religions. They develop social skills. They learn about what is right and wrong. They explore moral issues and consider different points of view about topics and issues. They recall fond memories of last year's culture day. Leaders ensure that equality is promoted and diversity is celebrated.

Leaders provide rich opportunities for pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about different aspects of physical and emotional health and well-being. They provide pupils with a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education. Leaders have developed a well-sequenced and age-appropriate relationships and sex education and health education curriculum. Leaders provide a careers programme that enables pupils to explore the choices available to them for their next steps. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Sixth-form students benefit from a range of enriching opportunities. Many volunteer in the community and local hospital, for example. Leaders develop sixth-form students' character exceptionally well.

Trustees and officers of NOVA Education Trust and governors bring a strong level of challenge and support to the leadership of the school. They are ambitious for all pupils. They are mindful of staff's welfare and well-being. Staff are proud to work at this school. Staff's morale is positive. They feel well supported by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that the safety and welfare of pupils are central to their work. They consider potential local risks that pupils may face. They adapt the curriculum to ensure that pupils are taught about personal risk and how to make safe choices. Leaders know pupils well. Staff receive regular training and updates. They know and understand their responsibilities. Leaders work well with external agencies. They act quickly to support pupils when extra help is needed. There are robust systems in place to check and record pupils' safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils who are at an early stage of reading do not receive the full support that they need to become fluent readers. Some pupils do not improve their reading skills quickly enough. Leaders must ensure that pupils at an early stage of reading learn to read fluently and with comprehension, thus enabling them to develop a love of reading, and to access the rest of the curriculum more effectively.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school meets the needs of all pupils with SEND effectively. When this is the case, this can limit how well these pupils can achieve. Leaders should ensure that all pupils with SEND, particularly the younger pupils, receive appropriate support so that they can fully access the provision and achieve as highly as they should.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve pupils' attendance and have had much success in reducing absence. However, many pupils are regularly absent. This means that too many pupils are missing out on important learning. Leaders must ensure that pupils who are regularly absent receive the support they need to improve their attendance.

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.

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 | 140984 |
| Local authority | Nottingham |
| Inspection number | 10241496 |
| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Free school |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 915 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 320 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Richard Flewitt |
| Headteacher | Robert White |
| Website | www.nuast.org |
| Date of previous inspection | 13 and 14 June 2017 |

Information about this school

- The school became part of Nova Education Trust in April 2018.
- The school increased its age range in September 2018 to include pupils aged 11 to 14 years. It now has pupils in Years 7 to 13.
- The school uses the services of six alternative providers. Four are registered and two are not registered with the Department for Education.
- The school provides some of the sixth-form provision at a second site. This is located at William Lee Building, Nottingham Science and Technology Park, Nottingham NG7 2RQ.
- The school specialises in science and technology.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires the school 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 graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They met with the special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding leads.
- Inspectors met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. They met with trustees, including the chair of the board of trustees, remotely. They met with trust officers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science and engineering. For each deep dive, inspectors met with teachers and curriculum leaders, visited lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally and informally about different aspects of school life.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included policies related to curriculum, teaching and behaviour. Inspectors reviewed the single central record. They reviewed safeguarding records.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents who had completed Ofsted Parent View. They reviewed responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Chris Davies, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Laura Rowe | Ofsted Inspector |
| Ellenor Beighton | Ofsted Inspector |
| Julie Swales | Ofsted Inspector |

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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022