

Inspection of Sidney Stringer Academy

2 Primrose Hill Street, Coventry, West Midlands CV1 5LY

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2023

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

This school was last inspected 10 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgments 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a vibrant and inclusive school. The school's 'DRIVE' values shine through all that is done here. Leaders and teachers show great determination in their work, while pupils develop a profound respect for individual difference. Everyone is accepted for who they are. One pupil's comment, which captured the views of many, was, 'I feel comfortable here because I can just be me, and proud of who I am in my own skin.'

Leaders pay a great deal of attention to pupils' safety and well-being. Because of this, pupils feel safe and well supported here. Pupils build strong, positive relationships with their teachers and their peers. Leaders are working tirelessly to achieve this aim for all. There is a culture of mutual respect between staff and students. Leaders have nurtured this carefully following the considerable disruption faced because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils value this and know who to turn to should they have a concern. Staff take swift action to resolve any incidents of bullying that occur.

Leaders have created a culture where personal growth is of the utmost importance. Academic success is highly valued here too. In lessons, pupils focus on their work. Pupils, and particularly those in the sixth form, develop into curious learners who show real determination in their learning.

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

Leaders have the highest expectations for pupils. Their drive and determination to ensure that pupils receive an education that expands their horizons is clear to see. Staff share the headteacher's compelling vision, and work tirelessly to achieve this.

Leaders have developed a broad and challenging curriculum across key stage 4 and key stage 5. Here, the curriculum is well structured. Leaders have thought carefully about the things pupils need to know to be successful. They have ordered this knowledge meticulously so that when pupils encounter new learning, this builds successfully on the things they already know. This helps pupils to remember what they have been taught. For example, in English, pupils in the sixth form develop an impressive understanding of challenging concepts such as romanticism when studying the poetry of Keats.

The curriculum is less well developed in key stage 3. Unless pupils opt to take a subject at GCSE, they do not have the opportunity to study the foundation subjects in enough depth. When this happens, pupils do not learn all they need to be successful in the qualifications that may follow.

Often, including those in the sixth form, teachers check carefully that pupils have understood the things they have been taught. They adapt their curriculum skilfully to ensure that any gaps in learning are quickly closed. This stops pupils from falling behind. However, in some subjects, the use of assessment is not precise enough.

Where this happens, teachers do not accurately identify when pupils have not understood the things they have been taught. Consequently, teachers do not adjust their teaching accordingly. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Leaders have developed a carefully considered package of development to ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills they need in their role. Consequently, within lessons, and particularly in the sixth form, many teachers are experts in their subject. They convey complex ideas with clarity. Leaders' work to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is admirable. They know these pupils very well. The work given to pupils with SEND is artfully matched to their needs. Because of this, pupils with SEND flourish. Leaders' work to support those pupils who are at an early stage of reading is well developed. Effective interventions help these pupils to read with fluency in a timely manner.

Most pupils, including those in the sixth form, behave well. They are considerate and courteous. Many show dedication to their learning. A small minority of pupils do not approach their studies with the same commitment. Leaders are working intelligently to address issues such as truancy from lessons. This work is beginning to have an impact. Leaders' work to ensure that pupils returned to school after the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and attended regularly, is notable. The introduction of therapeutic sessions in the school's 'centre for excellence' is helping to re-engage those pupils who struggle to attend.

Leaders' work to develop pupils' character is remarkable. It weaves through every aspect of school life. For example, students in the sixth form act as mentors to younger pupils, while many other pupils hold leadership roles such as 'year captains' or 'mental health ambassadors'. Pupils frequently raise funds for communities in need, such as supporting a food bank for local families. Pupils' understanding of their social and moral responsibility to their community is impressive. There is a broad range of opportunities for pupils to develop their passions outside of the classroom. Pupils regularly attend a range of clubs such as debating society and chess club. Leaders make sure that all pupils benefit from these opportunities. Pupils receive high-quality information about the world of work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that the safety of pupils is paramount. Staff receive a wealth of training that ensures they recognise pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff are vigilant. They raise concerns no matter how insignificant they may seem. Leaders respond to concerns with alacrity. Highly skilled staff are in place to ensure pupils get the support they need when they need it.

Leaders work closely with local police to better understand the risk to pupils in their community. They adapt their curriculum to ensure pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In key stage 3, across some areas of the curriculum, pupils do not have the opportunity to study the subject in the depth that they might. Where this happens, pupils miss out on knowledge that might be important for their next steps in education. Leaders should ensure that pupils have the opportunity to study each subject in sufficient depth.
- In some subjects, assessment is not consistently used precisely enough to identify the next steps that pupils need to take in their learning. As a result, teaching is not always precisely planned or delivered to move pupils on in their learning, and they do not achieve as well as they might. Leaders should refine the way in which pupils' learning is assessed in order to maximise their progress over time.

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	136126
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10266151
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,453
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	362
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julie Sullivan
Headteacher	Claire Turpin
Website	www.sidneystringeracademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses part-time alternative provision at several unregistered providers. This school is one of 5 schools that comprise the Sidney String Multi-Academy Trust.

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 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the SEND coordinator.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, history and business studies. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy, spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. The lead inspector spoke to the safeguarding leader about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents.
- Inspectors took account of parents' free-text comments and the responses on Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses to the pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Alexander Laney, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Considine	Ofsted Inspector
Geoff Renwick	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Byatt	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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