

Inspection of a good school: Sunnyside Spencer Academy

Great Hoggett Drive, Beeston, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG9 4HQ

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2023

Outcome

Sunnyside Spencer Academy continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this welcoming and inclusive school. They understand that they are valued for who they are. They feel safe and know they have trusted adults to talk to, should they wish. Pupils are happy and say that the best thing about the school is the caring teachers and staff.

There are high expectations for pupils to achieve well, despite any challenges they may face. These expectations are realised through the positive outcomes that most pupils achieve.

The school has a calm atmosphere, and pupils behave well. Most are ready to learn and enjoy their lessons. Well-trained staff provide effective support for pupils who have more challenging behaviour. Those pupils who need more time to settle have access to the school's nurture class, the Orchard. This is a place where pupils can learn to self-regulate their emotions and learn at their own pace.

Pupils enjoy exploring the forest school outdoor provision. There are a range of popular clubs for pupils to access, including netball, 'eco club' and choir.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. A comment from one parent, typical of many, is, 'This is a warm and welcoming school where staff go above and beyond to ensure all children are happy and safe.'

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

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils. They have designed a well-sequenced curriculum that enables pupils to build key knowledge over time. Teachers are confident in teaching their subjects and have secure subject knowledge. They present information

clearly, and they regularly check what pupils know, including before moving on to new learning. Teachers accurately identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. They ensure that pupils regularly revisit previous learning. The 'flashback Fridays' activity supports pupils to know and remember more.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support they need to access the curriculum. Teachers adapt their teaching to enable these pupils to access the same learning activities as their peers. For example, adults break down activities into smaller steps and use prompts to build pupils' understanding.

Leaders track how well most pupils are doing across the curriculum. They plan to extend this more broadly to include the small steps of progress for pupils with SEND.

Leaders' ambition is for all pupils to leave Sunnyside with a love of reading. They ensure that reading starts in the early years. All staff receive training to teach the phonics programme. Many children begin school with poor communication and language skills. This means that they find it more difficult to keep up. Leaders ensure that pupils who fall behind get the support they need. Most pupils can apply their phonic knowledge well when reading. Pupils read from books that broadly match the sounds they know. The weakest readers sometimes struggle to blend sounds together. However, pupils enjoy reading. They understand that they will get better with practice.

Children in the early years get off to a strong start. They follow well-established routines. The learning environment is rich in vocabulary. This encourages children to develop their language and communication skills. Children talk about their learning with confidence. For example, a child knew how to use 'part, part whole' reasoning to count using cubes. Children are proud of their achievements presented in their 'shine folders'. They are well prepared for Year 1.

Leaders understand the importance of ensuring that pupils can experience the world beyond Beeston. They enrich the curriculum by providing a range of trips and experiences. These include visits to the theatre, zoo and the seaside.

Pupils understand that they are unique, saying, 'It's okay to be different.' Pupils know the importance of respecting any differences. They know about different types of relationships. Pupils understand how to stay physically and mentally healthy. They know and understand the school's 'SHINE' values. Pupils enjoy achieving a 'shine badge' for putting the values into practice. Pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their education.

Almost all staff are proud to work at Sunnyside. They feel that leaders support them well with their workload and well-being. Leaders feel well supported by governors and the trust.

Those responsible for governance know the strengths of the school. They work effectively with leaders to ensure ongoing improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding. There is a culture of 'it could happen here'. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. All staff know how to spot the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Leaders work with external agencies to secure the right support for pupils and their families.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They understand safeguarding issues that could affect them in their local community. Leaders ensure that pupils know how to get help should they need it. Pupils say that the three school rules, 'be ready, safe and respectful', help to keep them safe.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2017.

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	140613
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10241690
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	221
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Donna Kinderman
Principal	Laurie Baczynski
Website	www.sunnysidespenceracademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Spencer Academies Trust.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club run by the school.
- The academy uses the services of a registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the principal, the vice principal, members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and representatives of the multi-academy trust, including the chief executive officer.
- The inspector undertook deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and computing. The inspector met with subject leaders, teachers and groups of pupils. She visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding procedures, including the single central record and child protection and safeguarding policies. She met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke to pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online parental survey, Ofsted Parent View, and spoke to parents at the beginning of the day.
- The inspector met with groups of staff to gather their views and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector spoke to pupils in lessons and observed their behaviour in lessons and during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector visited pupils in the forest school provision.
- The inspector met with leaders from the alternative provision the school uses.
- The inspector looked at documents relating to self-evaluation, school improvement, attendance and behaviour, the curriculum and governance.

Inspection team

Anita Denman, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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