

Inspection of The Brunts Academy

The Park, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 2AT

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 September 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

The headteacher of this school is Rachel Sutcliffe. This school is part of Greenwood Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Wayne Norrie, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mike Hamlin.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave. The majority of pupils rise to these expectations. Most pupils welcome the recent changes to improve the school. As a result of these changes, pupils feel safe. They reported that bullying is no longer a major concern. Pupils attend well. They take pride in their work.

The school is typically calm. Staff expect pupils to behave and learn well. However, pupils said that there is still some disruption to learning. They said that teachers do not always manage behaviour consistently well. Pupils are frustrated by this. A significant minority of pupils are reluctant to tell staff when they experience inappropriate comments, a lack of respect from other pupils or see poor behaviour. These pupils are still not confident that staff will deal with these incidents effectively. The school has new systems in place to enable pupils to report such concerns, which are still in the early days of implementation.

In the sixth form, students study a range of academic and vocational courses. They value the support and advice that many staff give them to prepare for their next steps.

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

This is a rapidly improving school. Leaders have created the right conditions for learning. Pupils' behaviour in most lessons and around the school site has improved significantly.

The school has designed an ambitious, well-sequenced curriculum for all subjects, including in the sixth form. There are clear curriculum plans in place. These identify the required knowledge and skills, and follow a sequence that allows pupils to build on what they already know.

Teachers are subject specialists. They break down learning into chunks to help pupils learn. Teachers use retrieval tasks and questioning to check pupils' prior learning. When these are effective, they allow pupils to recap on previous work and enable teachers to check pupils' understanding. However, teachers do not always use assessment well in lessons. They do not always address gaps in pupils' knowledge and misconceptions. This means that some pupils do not progress swiftly enough through the curriculum and do not achieve as well as they could.

Reading is a priority. A lot of work has been done to instil a love of reading, including a well-resourced library and tutor time reading. The school is improving the reading programme. Pupils who need extra support to become fluent readers are beginning to be identified. The curriculum to support these pupils is at the early stages of planning and implementation.

Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as other pupils, including in the sixth form. In most lessons, staff support pupils with SEND to produce work of the same quality as other pupils.

Students in the sixth form appreciate the efforts that teachers make to help them. They are proud of their school. There are opportunities for students in the sixth form to volunteer and help others. For example, they can become reading buddies or sports leaders.

The school's focus on rewarding pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes is beginning to make a difference. However, pupils' attitudes to learning are still variable. Some pupils told inspectors that others' behaviour can disrupt their lessons. Not all teachers apply the behaviour policy consistently. Pupils say that they often hear bad language in school, and some pupils show a lack of respect and tolerance for others.

Leaders have put in place a new personal development programme. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is well planned and sequenced. This is still in the early days of implementation. Leaders aim to broaden pupils' horizons. Careers education is of a high quality. Pupils learn how to access the wealth of pathways available to them. Staff provide a variety of extra-curricular activities. However, uptake of these is low. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of relationships and how to stay safe when they are online. However, pupils struggle to recall important messages about British values and protected characteristics.

Pupils, and some parents and carers, have mixed views about how well leaders communicate the school's vision and policies.

Leaders provide high-quality training to support staff to improve their practice. Most staff value this and are working well with leaders to continue to bring about the necessary improvements.

Trustees know the school very well. They know what needs to improve. The trust provides tailored support for the school. Staff feel well supported and their morale is high. Leaders are considerate of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are aware that some aspects of the curriculum need further development, especially regarding teachers' consistent use of assessment to identify gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge, and ensuring that teachers maintain high expectations across all lessons. Leaders must ensure that

assessment processes and the delivery of the curriculum in all subjects are of equally high quality so that pupils learn as well as they should.

- Some staff do not consistently apply the behaviour policy. This means that low-level disruption is not always addressed, and some pupils do not learn as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that the behaviour policy is implemented consistently so that all staff meet leaders' expectations of pupils' conduct.
- The school has not ensured that a culture of mutual respect and tolerance permeates all aspects of school life. Some pupils experience a lack of respect, tolerance and poor behaviour. Not all pupils feel confident to report concerns to an adult. Leaders must ensure that there is an open culture of respect and vigilance, where pupils feel confident to report their concerns knowing that leaders will take swift and effective action.
- The curriculum for PSHE is new. Pupils have gaps in their learning, especially regarding British values and the protected characteristics. Leaders need to ensure that pupils in all years benefit from a high-quality personal development programme that equips them to be well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Communication with parents is sometimes not as effective as it could be. Some parents feel that the school does not keep them informed well enough about decisions, especially regarding school uniform requirements and procedures to manage pupils' behaviour. Leaders need to ensure that they keep parents up to date with information about the effective work they are doing to care for and support pupils.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137763
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10284584
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1,468
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	128
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Hamlin
Principal	Rachel Sutcliffe
Website	www.bruntsacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 November 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Greenwood Academies Trust.
- The school uses three registered and five unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in art, geography, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited a range of lessons in other subjects. For these subjects, they checked the work that pupils had produced in lessons and spoke to pupils in the class.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. She reviewed a range of documents and the single central record.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- The lead inspector met with trustees.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school at break and lunchtime. An inspector held telephone conversations with staff who work with pupils at alternative provision.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Dawn Ashbolt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Martyn Skinner	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Ellenor Beighton	Ofsted Inspector
Damian Painton	Ofsted Inspector

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