

Inspection of Nottingham Academy

Greenwood Road, Bakersfield, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG3 7EB

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

Jessie Elbaz and Jo French are co-principals of this school. This school is part of the 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 Michael Hamlin.

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils are proud to attend this school. They like being part of a community that is rich, diverse and vibrant. Pupils respect each other's differences. Those who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are welcomed and supported. Pupils enjoy sharing stories about their own cultures. They show a mutual understanding of different faiths. They know what it means to be a good citizen.

Pupils develop warm and trusting relationships with staff. They know there is always someone they can talk with if they are worried about something. They value being able to visit the school's 'NAC_STOP' provision, where staff listen to them and provide support. Staff understand the community that the school serves. This helps pupils learn how to keep themselves safe.

Most pupils have positive attitudes and are keen to learn. They appreciate the range of subjects they can study, and they know that staff want them to be successful. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should by the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4. Some pupils do not attend school often enough and miss out on important learning. Other pupils struggle to meet the school's behaviour expectations. While the school has improved since its previous inspection, there is more work to do.

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

The school's leadership team has been strengthened since its previous inspection. The team has a clear ambition for what pupils can achieve and how pupils should behave. However, the team has not communicated its vision carefully enough to staff, and to parents and carers, to make sure that everyone is on board. As a result, while the school is getting better, it still requires further improvements.

The school is checking the curriculum in each subject to make sure that it is well planned. In some subjects, including English and mathematics, it is clear what pupils need to know and when. Key vocabulary is highlighted to help pupils understand each topic. Pupils gain more knowledge over time. However, in other subjects, the curriculum is not as well organised. In these subjects, the school is still working out exactly what pupils need to know and how the curriculum builds on what has gone before.

There are variations in how well the curriculum is taught. Some teachers use their subject-specialist knowledge well. They choose suitable strategies to teach new content. They ask questions that help pupils recall what they know and make links to previous learning. This helps pupils to deepen their understanding. However, some teachers do not follow the planned curriculum closely enough. Others do not know enough about the topic they are teaching or how it fits into the sequence of learning. Strategies they use to deliver the curriculum are not always suitable. When this happens, pupils often cannot remember what they have learned.

Pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get a good deal. They benefit from close support in the school's newly established enhanced resource unit. However, the quality of the support for other pupils with SEND is more variable. The curriculum is not always adapted well enough to meet these pupils' needs.

Children in the early years concentrate well and show high levels of curiosity. A wide range of activities provide them with plenty of opportunities to practise their writing and number work. Children learn how to manage their own feelings and make healthy choices. Positive partnerships between staff and parents help the children to flourish.

Improving the reading curriculum has been prioritised. Children in the early stages of learning to read practise the letters and sounds they know frequently. Any who fall behind get extra help to fill the gaps in their knowledge. This support continues until pupils become fluent and accurate readers. There are plenty of opportunities to promote pupils' love of reading, particularly in the primary phase. Pupils choose their own books from a diverse selection that reflects the wide range of cultures found in school.

Sixth-form students appreciate the support they get from staff. Students learn important life skills that prepare them for adulthood. They take on leadership roles mentoring younger pupils, raising funds for charity and being part of the National Citizen Service. Most students complete their courses and secure a suitable next-steps placement or, in some cases, move on to play basketball at an elite level.

Pupils' behaviour is improving. New strategies are helping to reduce the number of pupils removed from lessons. The number of suspensions is also falling. However, a minority of pupils, particularly in the secondary phase, still struggle to behave well. Some staff do not feel well supported in managing pupils' poor behaviour. Pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils are sanctioned more frequently than their peers. These groups of pupils are also absent from school too often.

Pupils benefit from a strong personal development programme. The school modifies this programme when it spots issues that affect pupils or the local community. Pupils know how to look after their physical and mental health. They understand what makes a healthy relationship. They like attending extra-curricular clubs and taking part in visits. Secondary-age pupils learn about different professions and career pathways to help them achieve their future aspirations.

Staff are proud to work at the school. However, some raise a concern about their workload.

The trust has a realistic view of the school's strengths and the things that need to get better. It provides plenty of opportunities for staff to enhance their practice. The trust's ongoing support is crucial in helping the school as it continues to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is still in the process of being developed. In some subjects, particularly the foundation subjects in the primary phase, the precise knowledge that pupils need to learn is not identified clearly enough. In the secondary phase, the planned curriculum in some subjects pays too little attention to what pupils already know. In both of these circumstances, pupils struggle to secure a strong foundation of knowledge based on what has gone before. The school must ensure that the curriculum in each subject is planned precisely and progressively so that pupils' knowledge builds over time.
- There are inconsistencies in how well the curriculum is implemented. These variations exist in and across subjects, and between key stages. Some teachers do not have the knowledge and skills they need to deliver the intended curriculum effectively. They do not always ensure that the curriculum they teach meets the needs of all pupils, including pupils with SEND. These inconsistencies mean that some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The school must ensure that the curriculum is delivered consistently well in each subject and across all key stages.
- Some pupils do not attend school often enough, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. These pupils miss out on learning important knowledge and on experiences to support their wider personal development. The school should continue to develop strategies that help all pupils attend school well.
- The school has high expectations for what its pupils can achieve. However, this ambitious vision is not shared effectively with all stakeholders so that it can be realised in full. Some staff and parents do not think that the school takes their concerns about some aspects of the provision's quality into account. The school must communicate effectively with all stakeholders so that there is a commonly shared view among staff and parents about what needs to improve and how everyone can work together to achieve this.

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	135881
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10288330
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2,176
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	124
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Hamlin
CEO of the trust	Wayne Norrie
Principal	Jessie Elbaz (Co-principal, secondary) Jo French (Co-principal, primary)
Website	www.nottinghamacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Greenwood Academies Trust.
- The school opened in September 2009.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the school operated from three sites. In September 2020, one of the sites registered as a separate school. As a result, there are less secondary-age pupils on the school's roll than was previously the case. The number of pupils in key stage 1 and the early years provision has also decreased.
- The school operates from two sites. Pupils in the primary phase and in Years 8 to 11 are educated at the school's main site. Pupils in Year 7 and in the sixth form

are educated at the site located at Sneinton Boulevard, Sneinton, Nottingham NG2 4GL.

- The principal with responsibility for the primary phase took up the position in April 2021. The executive principal who oversees the secondary phase took up the substantive role in September 2023.
- There have been a significant number of leadership and staff changes since the previous inspection. Most recently, a new leader with responsibility for the provision for pupils with SEND was appointed in the secondary phase.
- The school has recently established a parent and community forum to allow those interested in the work of the school to share their views.
- The school uses the services of two registered alternative provisions and one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast and an after-school club. Both of these clubs are overseen by the trust.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 executive principal who is responsible for the secondary phase and with the principal who is responsible for the primary phase. Inspectors also met with other school and trust leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the vice-chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into the following subjects: reading, mathematics, English, religion education, computing, modern foreign languages, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons and considered pupils' work. Inspectors spoke with teachers and pupils and heard some pupils read. On the second day of the inspection, inspectors examined the curriculum in a wider range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from a range of different year groups, including sixth-form students, pupils with SEND and pupils who speak EAL.

Inspectors also spoke with pupils informally and observed the behaviour of pupils during social times.

- An inspector spoke on the telephone with representatives of two of the alternative provisions used by the school.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks, holding discussions with safeguarding leaders, staff and pupils, and reviewing documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took note of the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. They also spoke with some parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. They considered information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and suspensions, and the wider curriculum.

Inspection team

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Donna Moulds	Ofsted Inspector
Javier Sanchez-Garcia	Ofsted Inspector
Aoife Galletly	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Wilkinson	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Adamson	Ofsted Inspector
Rakesh Patel	His Majesty's Inspector

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