

# Sutton Community Academy

High Pavement, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire NG17 1EE

## Inspection dates

19–20 March 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Inadequate</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Trust and school leaders have not fulfilled their statutory duties to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders have not identified potential risks quickly enough, or taken adequate action to reduce them. Vulnerable pupils have not been sufficiently supported.
- Records of serious safeguarding incidents are not sufficiently detailed and accurate. It is not always clear that leaders have responded to incidents in a timely manner.
- Leaders and trustees have not ensured that staff follow the school's policies or the statutory guidance in making checks on staff before they are appointed.
- Leaders do not evaluate the impact of their work well enough. They have not taken swift enough or rigorous action to bring about improvements, including in the sixth form.
- Leaders are unable to account for the school's use of the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up funding. They are unable to evaluate its impact or amend their plans accordingly.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent from school is above the national average.
- Some pupils say that bullying is not resolved well.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils are able to achieve.
- Teachers do not consistently apply the school's assessment and feedback policy. Pupils do not always know how to improve their work.
- Some parents do not feel that their concerns are responded to quickly enough, or to their satisfaction.

### The school has the following strengths

- Students in the sixth form receive effective guidance, feel safe and are well prepared for their next steps.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported and make good progress.
- The personal, social, health, citizenship education (PSHCE) curriculum helps pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe and prepares them well for life in British society.
- Pupils conduct themselves well. They are polite, confident and happy.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Trust and school leaders must urgently address the weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements by:
  - ensuring that risk assessments for vulnerable pupils are sufficiently detailed and consider all potential risks
  - regularly reviewing risk assessments for vulnerable pupils and amending them when necessary
  - ensuring that all staff understand the processes to follow if they have a concern about an adult's conduct
  - establishing a clear and secure process for mitigating risk while concerns about an adult's conduct are investigated
  - ensuring that records are clear and detailed, and contain all the information about referrals, monitoring and support
  - establishing protocols to ensure that all staff are kept appropriately informed about vulnerable pupils to adequately support them and safeguard all pupils
  - ensuring that safer recruitment practices are followed
  - carrying out risk assessments to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that leaders:
  - evaluate the impact of their work thoroughly and take swift action to address weaknesses when they are identified
  - account carefully for the allocation of the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding and evaluate its impact, amending plans accordingly
  - respond quickly and effectively to parents' concerns.
- Reduce the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent from school.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve
  - pupils know how to improve their work.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management could be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Trust and school leaders have not ensured that safeguarding arrangements are effective. There are considerable weaknesses in this area of the school's work. Members of the trust carried out a review of safeguarding procedures, but failed to identify these shortcomings.
- Leaders do not routinely evaluate the impact of their work. They have been slow to act to improve areas identified as weaknesses. Many plans are in place, but these are either slowly realised or yet to be implemented.
- Leaders do not have a strategic approach to the use of the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding. They do not carefully allocate the funding and cannot account for its spending. They are unable to evaluate the impact of the funding. As a result, they are unable to report to governors on its effectiveness.
- The SENCo provides strong leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND. Underperforming pupils are well supported to help them to make better progress. Additional funding is spent effectively. Some pupils receive additional help through the 'start right, end well' approach, which ensures that any barriers to learning are dealt with before school. Similarly, problems are resolved at the end of the day, so pupils can start the next day positively. Pupils with SEND make similar progress to all pupils nationally.
- Subject leaders have not always been well supported to develop their leadership skills or improve the quality of teaching in their subjects. Recent changes to line management are beginning to help heads of department to improve their effectiveness.
- Some curriculum choices have been ill thought-out. For example, all pupils previously took their English literature GCSE examinations one year early. This meant that not all pupils did as well as they should have done. Leaders have now reviewed the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs and interests of pupils well. The curriculum at key stage 3 is broad and varied. At key stage 4, pupils study the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) alongside more practical subjects such as construction and dance. All pupils follow the PSHCE curriculum, which has been redesigned to help pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including in terms of healthy relationships.
- Staff value the range of professional development activities on offer. They share best practice within their departments and across the school. Teachers say that this is helping them to improve their skills in the classroom.
- Newly qualified teachers feel well supported by subject mentors and senior leaders. They receive regular training which they say helps them to develop their practice. They are knowledgeable about safeguarding matters.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well across the school. 'News Friday' is popular with staff and pupils and encourages pupils to reflect on current issues.
- Parents' views about the school are mixed. Many parents are positive about the school. However, of those parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online

questionnaire, a significant number said that they did not feel that the school responded well to their concerns. Communication with some parents has been poor. A minority of parents have raised serious concerns about the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance is provided by the trust board and a local governing body (LGB). Many functions of governance are delegated to the LGB.
- Those responsible for governance did not respond well enough when a serious safeguarding concern was raised. They did not challenge leaders to ensure that processes were amended accordingly.
- The LGB do not have a secure enough understanding of the school's performance. For example, members told the lead inspector that pupils' outcomes in 2018 were good. They did not recognise that progress in English had been in the bottom 10% of all schools nationally. Members of the LGB have not had sufficient training, particularly in relation to their understanding of pupils' outcomes.
- Those responsible for governance have not ensured that they have the information they need to hold leaders to account for additional funding.
- The LGB meets regularly. Members are committed and keen to make a difference, and meetings are well attended.
- The trust is currently reviewing governance structures across the trust.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Trust and school leaders have failed to adhere to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- Leaders have failed to identify risks quickly enough, or implement appropriate risk assessments to protect vulnerable pupils once these risks have been identified. They have not adequately reviewed risk assessments when the risks have been heightened. Vulnerable pupils have not received the necessary support to protect them from risk.
- In responding to issues of safeguarding, leaders have not always taken the wishes of the victim into consideration. They have not considered the possible wider, contextual safeguarding issues.
- Leaders have not ensured that a culture of safeguarding runs through all aspects of the school's work. Pupils enjoy good relationships with their teachers and know how to report their concerns. However, these positive aspects are overshadowed by serious weaknesses in the school's systems, and a failure to acknowledge, reflect on and learn from past mistakes.
- Leaders have followed correct procedures in reporting concerns about staff conduct to the appropriate authority. However, they have not taken swift enough, or sufficiently secure, action to mitigate potential risks while concerns are investigated. Records of these incidents lack detail and clarity.

- Leaders cannot be certain that all staff are suitable to work with children, because they have not carried out all the necessary checks. Some leaders were aware that appropriate checks were not being carried out and proceeded to appoint staff nonetheless. Recently, when these failings have been identified, leaders have not assessed potential risks.
- There is a lack of a joined-up approach to safeguarding arrangements. This has been exacerbated by poor communication in the past, for example when there have been changes in personnel.
- Records of safeguarding concerns and the monitoring of vulnerable pupils are not sufficiently detailed. It is not clear precisely what action has been taken in response to serious concerns.
- Staff have received up-to-date and relevant training and understand their safeguarding duties to report concerns about a pupil. They know to whom they should refer concerns and the processes they should follow. Staff recognise specific safeguarding risks that are pertinent to the local area.
- Staff understand their duties to report concerns about another member of staff's conduct to the principal, but they do not know what they should do if they had a concern about the principal's conduct.
- Leaders have redesigned the PSHCE curriculum to support pupils in protecting themselves from risks. Pupils learn about relevant issues in an age-appropriate way. They revisit topics throughout their time at school. The vast majority of pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and feel safe in school.
- Procedures to monitor pupils' attendance are robust. Absences are followed up quickly and the reasons for non-attendance are verified.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent between key stages and subjects.
- Most teachers have good subject knowledge. They use this to plan activities which interest most pupils and help them to learn.
- Teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of what pupils are able to achieve. Teachers do not routinely consider pupils' prior learning when planning activities. Sometimes the least able pupils are not effectively supported. On occasion, this means that they lose interest and focus, and do not complete their work.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged well enough by their work.
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils enable most pupils to participate well in their learning.
- The school's assessment and feedback policy is not consistently applied. Pupils do not always understand what they need to do to improve their work and to make progress.
- There is some strong teaching practice in the school. In these examples, teachers have high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve. They make good use of questioning to probe and develop pupils' understanding. For example, in English,

inspectors observed a teacher extending pupils' understanding of poetry by asking stretching questions and supporting them to use complex linguistic terminology.

- Pupils with SEND are provided for well in lessons. For example, inspectors observed visual resources being used to help pupils in practical science experiments. Effective teaching strategies and an amended curriculum are helping these pupils to make good progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate because safeguarding arrangements are not effective. The most vulnerable pupils are not always well supported.
- Leaders have taken action to improve processes to support the most vulnerable pupils. Risk assessments are now more appropriate, but it is too early to evaluate the impact of these changes.
- The comprehensive PSHCE curriculum covers relevant topics, including those related to safeguarding. Pupils' personal development is promoted through the high-quality teaching of this subject.
- Qualified staff support some pupils' mental health. For example, pupils can access a school counsellor and the emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA).
- Leaders have introduced the 'kindness programme' to promote anti-bullying attitudes. Most pupils say that although bullying does happen, it is dealt with effectively. However, a minority felt that bullying recurred. All pupils who made their views known said that they know who they should speak to if they are concerned about bullying.
- Pupils also appreciate the 'blue button' means of reporting concerns and say that staff respond quickly when they use this facility. Some pupils reported that when incidents have been reported, they are not always dealt with effectively and so it is not always quickly resolved.
- Pupils who attend alternative off-site provision are well supported. Leaders liaise closely with providers, monitoring their safety, attendance and well-being. Pupils make good progress, both socially and academically.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Staff model positive behaviour which pupils replicate. The overwhelming majority of pupils are polite and courteous. For example, they hold doors open for each other and for adults. They conduct themselves well around school and in lessons.
- When teaching does not meet pupils' needs they lose focus and motivation. This sometimes leads to low-level disruption.
- Leaders have adopted a 'breaking down barriers' approach to improving pupils' attendance. They intervene and support individual pupils to attend more regularly.

Whole-school attendance has been consistently above average in recent years. Disadvantaged pupils do not attend as well and in 2018 disadvantaged pupils' attendance was below the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent from school was also above the national average.

- Pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour are supported well. Exclusions are rare.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils make inconsistent progress across different subjects, because the quality of teaching is not secure enough to ensure that they make good progress in all subjects. For example, they make better progress in mathematics than they do in English.
- Gaps in staffing have led to some pupils making poor progress, for example in modern foreign languages.
- Pupils who start at the school with poor skills in reading and mathematics do not catch up quickly enough with their peers. Expectations of how much progress pupils should be able to make are too low.
- In 2017, outcomes at key stage 4 declined. They declined further in 2018. This was, in part, due to the decision to enter pupils for their GCSE English literature exam while in Year 10. This strategy did not yield good examination results for this cohort of pupils and leaders have therefore halted this approach.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved a strong pass and a standard pass in English and mathematics in 2018 was considerably below the national average. Pupils' achievement in English was lower than that in mathematics. In 2018, pupils' progress in English was in the bottom 10% of all schools nationally. Improved teaching means that current pupils are making better progress than in the past.
- Pupils with SEND made better progress in 2018 than in the past. Their overall progress was similar to that made by all pupils nationally. They made particularly strong progress in practical and vocational subjects, exceeding by far that made by all pupils nationally.
- Amendments to the curriculum are helping current pupils to make better progress than in recent years.
- Pupils made particularly good progress in art, dance, drama and construction in 2018. Pupils achieved higher grades in these subjects than in other subjects.
- The proportion of pupils entering the EBacc has been consistently above the national average in recent years. However, attainment in this area remains below the national average.
- Leaders' tracking information and work in pupils' books indicate that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, currently in Years 10 and 11 are making better progress than in the past.
- Pupils who attend alternative off-site provision follow courses which meet their needs and interests. This helps to keep them engaged in their learning and to make good progress.



## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Requires improvement

- Students have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. The PSHCE curriculum covers topics thoroughly and in an age-appropriate way. Relationships between staff and students are positive and appropriate. Students say that they feel safe in school. They know how to address any concerns that might arise.
- Leaders do not have a secure understanding of the provision's strengths and weaknesses. They have identified some areas needing improvement but plans to address these have been implemented slowly. Equally, they do not evaluate the impact of their actions regularly or thoroughly enough to bring about rapid improvements.
- The requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes are met. All students participate in work-related learning. Work experience placements are carefully checked to ensure that they are appropriate to students' needs and that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Students also have the opportunity to work as lunchtime supervisors. They are well trained, for example, in safeguarding matters.
- All students receive impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance which helps them to make informed decisions about their next steps. The proportion of students moving on to appropriate destinations has increased year on year and is now above the national average.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are extremely passionate about their subject. Students engage enthusiastically in their learning. Inspectors noted teachers encouraging students to use complex technical terminology in their responses to questions. However, teachers do not consistently ensure that all students are sufficiently challenged.
- The small number of students taking examinations in each subject makes it difficult to draw conclusions about the performance in individual subjects. Overall, students make progress, in academic and vocational subjects, that is similar to that made by all students nationally.
- Some students previously followed a curriculum that did not meet their needs, resulting in poor retention rates between Year 12 and Year 13. Leaders have taken effective action to address this concern and students are now guided well through the processes of applying to and enrolling in the sixth form. Students feel well supported by what is known as the 'right student, right course' approach.
- Students follow a structured and carefully planned PSHCE programme. Students participate in 'news Friday', which promotes their personal development and understanding of British values. For example, they have discussed the political situation in Syria and in Britain. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum enables students who have not yet achieved a standard pass in English and mathematics to continue with their studies towards a suitable qualification. For example, some students work towards functional skills qualifications as well as GCSEs. Students' progress in English and mathematics GCSE resits is similar to that achieved by post-16 students nationally. Students' performance in mathematics is stronger than in English.



## School details

Unique reference number	139063
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10094888

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	668
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	74
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Bernard Dickenson
Principal	David Mackey
Telephone number	01623 980055
Website	<a href="http://www.suttonacademy.atrust.org.uk">www.suttonacademy.atrust.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:academy.office@suttonacademy.atrust.org.uk">academy.office@suttonacademy.atrust.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	24–25 November 2016

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Transformation Academy Trust. The chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust took up her post in September 2018.
- The principal took up the post as substantive principal in March 2019. He had previously been the acting principal since June 2018. Prior to June 2018, the principal was the school's designated safeguarding lead.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.

- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The school has pupils from 11 different ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is considerably lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND who do not have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an EHCP is higher than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is considerably higher than the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative, off-site provision at CAST and PollyTeach.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out following a number of complaints made to Ofsted which raised serious concerns. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the school should take place to follow-up whole school issues that were raised. Inspectors sought to establish whether safeguarding was effective.
- Inspectors observed learning in 32 lessons. They also visited two tutorial periods.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and a large sample of pupils' books.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, other staff, members of the LGB and a representative of the trust. The lead inspector also held telephone discussions with the trust's CEO, a consultant who has been working with the school and was previously employed by the trust, and a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lessons, at breaktime and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all years in discussion groups, in their lessons and informally around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the minutes of meetings of the LGB, information about the attainment and progress of all pupils, records relating to behaviour, and information on the school's website. They evaluated the school's pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding strategies.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record and staff recruitment files. They also examined the school's records relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the 61 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the school's own survey of parents' views. The lead inspector spoke with a parent by telephone.

## Inspection team

Deborah Mosley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alison Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Tanya Wiles	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Long	Ofsted Inspector

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