

Inspection of an outstanding school: Nethergate Academy

Swansdowne Drive, Clifton, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG11 8HX

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

Outcome

Nethergate Academy continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel happy, safe and well prepared for future learning and adult life.

Pupils value what they learn in school. They like the range of subjects they study and understand why reading is important. They benefit from experiencing the world of work and take part in a variety of activities that help them to develop positive characteristics.

Pupils are kind to each other. They recognise that they are taught to behave well and know that staff will help them to resolve any concerns they may have. Pupils believe that bullying is very rare in the school. This is the case. The few issues that do arise are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Pupils enjoy positive and productive relationships with staff and their peers. They consistently receive high-quality education and are helped to remember important information. They use what they have learned in the past to help them understand new topics.

Staff have high expectations of every pupil. They use their knowledge of each individual to adapt the curriculum to help pupils succeed. Pupils benefit from academic studies, outdoor learning, high-quality careers education and many personal development opportunities. These experiences help to prepare pupils exceptionally well for life beyond school.

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

The ambitious curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Pupils study a wide range of subjects and benefit from many opportunities to experience the wider world. Communication, safety, well-being and independence underpin every aspect of the

school's provision. Pupils achieve exceptionally well and are thoroughly prepared for their next steps.

Staff have secure subject knowledge and use this to help pupils know more and remember more. Teachers use assessment skilfully to adapt their teaching and shape the curriculum. Staff work well together, and teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils' learning and promote their independence.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Strategies to help pupils develop a love of reading are embedded securely and consistently in every year group. From the moment pupils enter the school, they are encouraged to handle books, make sounds and listen to stories, rhymes and songs. There is a sharp focus on ensuring that pupils gain the phonics knowledge and language comprehension necessary to read. Pupils regularly practise using their phonics knowledge. They use it to read appropriately selected books. Pupils also access a range of other literature, and confident readers are encouraged to read with expression and feeling.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and fundamental British values are embedded in the curriculum. For example, pupils learn about different religions. They are taught about making the right choices, and they are tolerant and respectful. Pupils vote on the school council. Theme days and assemblies supplement what takes place on a daily basis.

Pupils access a wide, rich set of coherently planned experiences to enhance their personal development. They involve themselves in activities in the local community, benefit from travel training, visit workplaces, enjoy residential trips and take part in swimming lessons, horse riding and a range of clubs. Crumbs, the school café, is efficiently run by post-16 students and accessed by staff and other pupils in the school. All of these activities enhance pupils' wider development exceptionally well.

All pupils receive high-quality careers education. When they leave school, all pupils move on to purposeful and sustained destinations, and several eventually enter the world of work. The school prepares pupils extremely well for future success in education, employment and training.

The post-16 curriculum is ambitious and well planned. It promotes students' personal development and gives young people the confidence to make a positive contribution to society. Students are helped to develop their independence and plan for their futures.

Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They respond positively to high expectations and clear routines. Staff manage pupils' behaviour skilfully and help individuals to regulate themselves. Pupils benefit from highly successful strategies to help them succeed in their education.

The school is well led and managed. Leaders ensure that pupils' needs are identified correctly, and effective strategies are in place to enable every pupil to achieve very well. Staff receive focused and high-quality professional development. Leaders ensure that the intended curriculum is consistently implemented effectively.

Staff feel that leaders listen to them and care for their well-being. They believe that they can raise concerns about workload and that leaders will deal with their concerns appropriately. Teachers who are new to the profession feel very well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a strong safeguarding culture. Staff are well trained and receive regular updates to help them keep pupils safe. Staff know how to identify pupils who may need early help or who are at risk of harm. They take swift action to protect these pupils. Staff communicate well with each other, and leaders make timely referrals. Staff work well with families and a range of outside agencies to safeguard pupils.

The curriculum helps pupils to reduce the risk of being harmed. Pupils learn about local, national and current issues to help them stay safe. Pupils feel safe in school.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in March 2018.

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	137915
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10269202
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	30
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Hamlin
Principal	Tracey Ydlibi
Website	www.nethergateacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	28 February and 1 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has opened a specialist provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder, with six classes.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- 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

- 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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the principal, the deputy principals, the assistant principal, the head of school, curriculum leaders and groups of staff. The lead inspector had a remote meeting with the trust's chief executive officer. He also had telephone discussions with the chair of trustees and two representatives of an alternative provider.
- Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils and spoke with pupils in their lessons and around school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during social times.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, English, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, talked to staff, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also visited other sessions on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements. They spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding. The lead inspector met with the designated leader and reviewed the school's systems and single central record.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of the trust and documentation relating to the curriculum, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the staff surveys.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mike Pride

Ofsted Inspector

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