

Inspection of a good school: Nottingham University Samworth Academy

Bramhall Road, Bilborough, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG8 4HY

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 May 2023

Outcome

Nottingham University Samworth Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud and happy to be part of this inclusive school. The atmosphere is cheerful and friendly. Pupils feel safe. They have positive relationships with staff, who know them well and challenge them. Pupils also have respectful relationships with each other. One simply said, 'We all just get along.'

The school expects everyone to work hard and be kind. Pupils understand this. They say staff are fair. They trust staff to address any disruption so that learning can continue. Pupils get 'green flags' when they go above and beyond expectations. This motivates them.

Reading is fundamental to the curriculum and the wider life of the school. Pupils also learn to express themselves well. They develop the skills they need to thrive, both academically and in life. Pupils enjoy learning and want to do well, including in the sixth form. Students in the sixth form study a growing range of courses.

Pupils enjoy a rich variety of experiences and activities that enhance their social and cultural education. In tutor time, they read books that develop their understanding of the world. They enjoy participating in sporting competitions. They make meaningful contributions to their school in the eco-club and school council, as well as acting as reading ambassadors.

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

Leaders have set a clear vision to make sure that pupils have the confidence to 'write their own story'. This means ensuring that pupils have as many options as possible for future education, training or employment. They also want pupils to develop the confidence to make the most of the opportunities available to them. Leaders, including from the trust, have worked with determination to construct a curriculum to achieve this.

They provide staff with high-quality training to develop the expertise they need to deliver the curriculum well.

Leaders have thought carefully about what and when pupils should learn in different subjects. They have considered pupils' starting points. They ensure that learning can build steadily towards ambitious goals. This includes the implementation of more demanding vocabulary in the curriculum to help pupils express their ideas clearly. Most teachers present new information clearly and check that pupils know and understand it. Pupils value the way many teachers model how to plan and carry out learning tasks. In the strongest subjects, teachers give pupils tasks where they apply knowledge and deepen their understanding. However, this is not consistent across all areas of the curriculum.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those who are deaf, is strong. Leaders make sure that staff identify pupils' needs quickly and correctly. Staff use the information available to them to help pupils to study the curriculum successfully. The 'nurture' provision in key stage 3 is highly effective.

The teaching and promotion of reading is a strength of the school. Pupils are confident reading aloud in lessons and in tutor time. Leaders use assessment well to identify how to help pupils who need to improve their reading. They provide a range of carefully chosen reading interventions. Some pupils act as reading ambassadors, helping other pupils to become more confident readers.

Students in the sixth form study a range of courses. This is expanding to respond to their needs and ambitions. They benefit from a strong programme for personal development. For example, students participate actively in debates. They develop valuable skills that prepare them for their next steps.

Pupils' learning goes well beyond the academic. For example, the school celebrates diversity and pupils' individuality. Pupils discover and develop their talents and interests through lessons and extra-curricular opportunities. Teachers challenge them to consider views and cultures that are different from their own. Staff know pupils well, and they provide strong pastoral support.

A small number of pupils need help to improve their well-being, behaviour or attendance. Leaders work with a strong sense of moral purpose to support these pupils well. They work closely with pupils and their families to identify the right support for each pupil. They review their work and try something new if they need to. This means a great deal to pupils. One pupil explained how staff taught her that, if she makes a mistake, 'tomorrow is a new day'.

Staff describe school leaders as 'inspirational'. They share leaders' ambition for pupils. Staff in all roles feel valued, supported and encouraged. Leaders, including governors, prioritise work-life balance. The trust and governors provide an effective balance of support and challenge to school leaders and staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a well-established culture of care and vigilance in this school. Leaders provide effective staff training and updates. Staff know what to do if they have any worries about a pupil.

Leaders have set up systems to ensure that they respond swiftly and effectively to any concerns. Staff keep detailed records. These show that leaders work well with local safeguarding partners and are tenacious in getting pupils the help they need. Leaders respond extremely well to reports of child-on-child abuse.

Pupils know that they can share any worries with staff, who care and know them well. In lessons and assemblies, they learn to keep themselves and others safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some areas of the curriculum are at earlier stages of development than others. Where this is the case, leaders and teachers have not adopted approaches to teaching the curriculum that consistently allow pupils to make as much progress as they should. Leaders must ensure that teachers consider carefully how best to teach the curriculum so that pupils can embed key concepts, use knowledge fluently and develop their understanding.

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 September 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	135761
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10241735
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 sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	850
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	42
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margaret Monckton
Headteacher	Emma Howard
Website	www.nusa.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 and 20 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up her post in September 2019.
- The school is part of Nova Education Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision 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 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 that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders, staff and pupils. They met with leaders from Nova Education Trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited lessons and looked at pupils' work in other subjects. They visited the school's provision for deaf pupils, reading interventions and tutor time. They observed pupils at various times of the school day.
- The lead inspector visited 'Focussed Futures Provision', the school's behaviour support provision. Inspectors spoke to representatives of a sample of the alternative provisions used by the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions during the inspection and the Ofsted surveys.

Inspection team

Aoife Galletly, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Chris Carr

His Majesty's Inspector

Simon Mosley

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023