

Inspection of The Suthers School

Cross Lane, Fernwood, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 3NH

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and most said that they enjoy coming to school. Pupils recognise that teachers have high expectations of what they should know and be able to do. Most pupils want to do well in their studies.

Pupils know that the school provides an ambitious curriculum, and they appreciate this. Many pupils enjoy the enrichment opportunities offered by the school. For example, pupils can take part in kung fu and dance sessions. Pupils said that they would not have the opportunity to do such activities elsewhere.

Pupils appreciate the rewards systems and many wear their achievement badges with pride. They feel listened to, and recognise that leaders make changes in response to their views.

Pupils reported that behaviour is not consistently good across the school. Younger pupils are particularly concerned that some lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils do not think that staff manage behaviour consistently.

Pupils are not concerned about bullying. Pupils said that it is okay to be different in this school. They are confident about reporting any concerns that they might have, and know that they will be taken seriously. Pupils feel safe in school. The most vulnerable pupils are very well supported.

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

The curriculum reflects leaders' high aspirations for pupils. It is ambitious and appropriately challenging, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils study a wide range of subjects throughout key stages 3 and 4. As the school grows, leaders are introducing new subjects to broaden the curriculum further. Leaders prioritise pupils' needs and interests, for example by continuing to offer a subject that only a small number of pupils want to study. The proportion of pupils studying a language at GCSE level is increasing.

Subject leaders are passionate. They have designed curriculums to inspire and excite pupils. They aim for all pupils to have a rich knowledge of their subject by the end of key stage 3, not just those who will continue studying the subject in key stage 4. Subject plans are very carefully thought out. Leaders have identified the most important knowledge and concepts that they want pupils to know, and by when. Curriculums are sequenced to help pupils build on their knowledge.

Most teachers have good subject knowledge. Subject leaders provide effective support for staff who teach outside their area of specialism. Teaching routines, such as the 'connect' activity, are designed to give pupils the opportunity to revisit knowledge to help them remember more over time. Not all staff use agreed

approaches effectively. Teachers make good use of discussion to help pupils develop their knowledge. The school's approach to feedback does not ensure that pupils' misconceptions are routinely corrected in their independent work. Some pupils make the same errors repeatedly, particularly in relation to literacy.

Leaders have not ensured that all pupils behave consistently well. Pupils, particularly younger pupils, reported that lessons are often disrupted by others' poor behaviour. This is especially the case when classes are taught by temporary staff. Pupils do not always respond positively when challenged by staff. Many pupils, especially in key stage 4, have positive attitudes to school life. They work hard and are polite and respectful. Leaders have taken effective action to support pupils who find it difficult to attend school regularly.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development well. The curriculums for civics and personal, social and health education provide pupils with the knowledge they need to live responsible, healthy lives. Pupils understand diversity and embrace differences in others. Pupils receive high-quality careers education throughout their time at school. Pupils are well supported to make decisions about their next steps. Current Year 11 pupils have appropriate plans for the next stage in their education and development.

Trustees recognise that they have not held leaders to account effectively in the past. Recent changes have led to a strengthening of governance arrangements. The trust has provided effective support for many aspects of the school's work. For example, middle leaders have benefited from support in curriculum design.

Leaders are taking action to address staff workload. Teachers who are at the early stages of their career feel very well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are knowledgeable and alert to the safeguarding issues that are pertinent to the local area. The curriculum ensures that pupils learn about issues that might affect them.

Staff receive regular, up-to-date training. They understand their duties to support safeguarding arrangements, and know how to raise concerns. Leaders take safeguarding concerns seriously. They take appropriate action, for example by implementing robust risk assessments. Leaders involve external agencies when necessary.

Records are detailed and of high quality. They provide the necessary information to ensure that pupils' well-being can be monitored effectively.

The trust maintains oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that all pupils behave consistently well. Too often, learning is disrupted by poor behaviour, particularly for younger pupils. Leaders should ensure that the school implements an effective behaviour-management policy consistently. They should ensure that all staff are supported to manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Leaders should monitor behaviour-management information and act accordingly to tackle issues when they arise.
- The school's approach to feedback does not ensure that pupils' misconceptions and errors are routinely corrected. Pupils do not always benefit from helpful feedback. Leaders should ensure that the school's approach to feedback is consistently delivered. They should ensure that teachers give pupils regular, helpful feedback.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	144768
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10212016
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	422
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Flewitt
Headteacher	Nicola Watkin
Website	www.suthersschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in 2017. It is part of the Nova Education Trust. The school's headteacher took up her post in September 2021.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative, off-site provision at Hill Holt Wood and Magnus Church of England Academy. These providers are registered.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 senior leaders, subject leaders and groups of staff. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the Nova Education Trust and two trustees, including the chair of the board.
- Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils and spoke with pupils in their lessons and around school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and around school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, modern foreign languages, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also reviewed the school's reading curriculum and curriculum plans for other subjects.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements. They spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding. The lead inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding records and the school's single central record.
- Inspectors considered the 96 responses to Ofsted Parent View and the 75 free-text comments. They considered responses to the pupil and staff surveys. Inspectors considered the views of a parent, as shared in a letter to the lead inspector.

Inspection team

Deborah Mosley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Craig	Ofsted Inspector
Dick Vasey	Ofsted Inspector
Aoife Galletly	Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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