

Inspection of George Spencer Academy

Arthur Mee Road, Stapleford, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG9 7EW

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

The 'ethos of excellence' that leaders have created at this school sets the tone for the high expectations they have. Pupils rise to meet these high expectations. They commit to their education and achieve well.

Many pupils take up roles as ambassadors. This allows them to develop leadership skills and demonstrate responsibility. For example, some pupils promote mental-health awareness, and others act as advocates for curriculum areas. They wear their light bulb badges with pride. All pupils take part in the excellence awards. This encourages them to develop their character through embodying the school's core values. Pupils receive tiered awards for doing so.

The wider curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. They accept others. Pupils know that bullying is not acceptable. Many agree that bullying is not tolerated at this school.

Leaders have ensured that teachers have a pupil-centred approach. Staff know pupils well. Pupils know there is someone to talk to if they have a problem. Pupils say they feel safe and are happy at this school.

Students in the sixth form benefit from an exceptional programme of study. They take pride in supporting the local community and younger pupils at the school.

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

The curriculum is ambitious at George Spencer Academy. The academic curriculum is broad. More pupils than ever now study a language in key stage 4. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum also develops each pupil as an individual through the 'wider curriculum' and the 'hidden curriculum'.

Leaders have considered the most important concepts they want pupils to know and the depth of understanding they need to achieve. The essential facts and knowledge pupils must have are made explicit. Teachers deliver the identified knowledge and facts logically. This helps pupils build on what they already know.

Teachers use appropriate methods to present information well to pupils. They consider how to match a teaching approach to the specific subjects or topics. Teachers use mini whiteboards to gain whole-class responses. This helps most teachers check that pupils are learning. Most teachers have strong subject knowledge for the subjects they teach. Leaders prioritise training for teachers who need to develop their subject knowledge. This helps teachers to deliver the curriculum effectively.

Teachers promote reading to all pupils. Pupils at the early stages of reading have additional help from an early reading expert. This helps these pupils to become better readers and to access the full curriculum.

Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can access qualifications that will support them to achieve their future goals. Leaders encourage parents and carers of pupils with SEND to engage with the school. For example, there are 'meet the team' events for parents of pupils with SEND. Leaders identify strategies to support pupils with SEND and share these with teachers. Many teachers use this information well to help pupils with SEND achieve. This practice is not yet consistently and securely embedded.

Teachers encourage pupils to get the basics of behaviour right all of the time. Pupils gain positive points for this. It helps pupils rise to teachers' high expectations. There is little disruption to learning. The high standards allow pupils to spend the vast majority of time following the ambitious curriculum.

Pupils benefit from a well-devised personal development programme. They gain a good grasp of age-appropriate relationships education. They learn about cultures different to their own. Most recently, all pupils have learned about how and why many Muslims will observe Ramadan. There is a wide range of activities, including over 50 clubs, during lunchtime and after school. These help pupils develop their talents and interests. Pupils look forward to 'excellence days', which builds their cultural capital and prepares them for their next steps.

Students in the sixth form benefit from an exceptional quality of education. They gain detailed knowledge and high-level skills across the curriculum. The wider development of students goes beyond the expected. Students hold highly positive views of the provision they access. Most recently, students have supported the local community by holding a quiz night at a local café.

Leaders consider staff's workload. Staff are proud to be a part of this school. Leaders put pupils at the heart of all their decisions to give them every chance to achieve their full potential.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders train staff well so that they are vigilant and recognise immediately if a pupil might be at risk of harm.

Leaders follow up any concerns swiftly. They keep detailed records of incidents and actions taken to keep pupils safe. Leaders recognise contextual safeguarding issues and have built further capacity to support pupils' mental health and deal with other safeguarding issues. This enables pupils to receive help quickly. Leaders work closely with a range of external services to support the most vulnerable pupils.

Trustees and governors are rigorous in their approach to ensuring that the school has a strong safeguarding culture.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not always use the identified strategies to support pupils with SEND precisely enough. Leaders should ensure that all teachers are trained well to use the identified strategies to support pupils with SEND to achieve exceptionally well.

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	136291
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10265610
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1,651
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	222
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Donna Kinderman
Principal	Helen Corbett
Website	www.george-spencer.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 May 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Spencer Academies Trust.
- 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.
- The school uses three registered providers and four unregistered providers to provide education to a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, art, history, geography and computing. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited a range of lessons in other subjects.
- Inspectors visited form times and assemblies.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development, the sixth form, the provision for pupils with SEND, the pupil premium, children looked after, outreach and alternative provision.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5.
- The lead inspector met with the safeguarding leader to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. He reviewed a range of documents related to safeguarding, including the school's single central record.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The lead inspector met with a member of the local governing board and directors of the trust board. This included the chief executive officer and chair.
- The lead inspector met with delegates of the trust's executive team.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil questionnaire.
- The lead inspector carefully considered all the free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.
- The lead inspector scrutinised the school's behaviour records, including the school's response to bullying.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Dave Gilkerson	His Majesty's Inspector
Sue Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Louisa Morris	Ofsted Inspector

Peter Monk

Ofsted Inspector

Teresa Roche

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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