

Inspection of The South Wolds Academy & Sixth Form

Church Drive, Keyworth, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG12 5FF

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2025

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

The headteacher of this school is Halina Angus. This school is part of East Midlands Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Lisa Walton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ann Witheford.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a culture of aspiration at this school. Staff want pupils to achieve well, and they do. Pupils like school. They form strong, trusting relationships with staff who provide them with support when they need it.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They use the school's clear behaviour and reward systems to help pupils to make the right choices and receive recognition for doing so. Students in the sixth form have an impressive appetite for learning. They relish opportunities to develop their understanding and are consistently committed to achieving their best.

The provision for students in the sixth form is exceptional. Students share their pride in the sixth-form community. Students support one another in their learning as well as socially and emotionally.

Pupils benefit from wider opportunities. They develop their talents and take part in a range of activities including sports, music and chess clubs. The school has ensured that pupils develop their ability to debate skilfully and discuss important issues. Students in the sixth form volunteer in the school and the community. They act as excellent role models to their younger peers.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. The important knowledge that pupils should learn has been carefully organised so that teachers know what to teach and when. Pupils enjoy learning at this school. They often produce work of high quality and develop secure subject knowledge. In many subjects, pupils become increasingly independent and make choices about the direction that their work takes. Students in the sixth form develop impressive subject knowledge. They are curious and ask intelligent questions which help them to further enhance their understanding.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They use this knowledge to provide clear explanations for pupils. Teachers model how to complete tasks and provide pupils with opportunities to practise applying what they have learned in new contexts. On occasion, teachers do not provide pupils with the explanations or learning opportunities they need to build their knowledge. This includes when pupils are considering the most complex aspects of the subjects they study. On these occasions, pupils do not develop their knowledge as well as they could.

Pupils are made to feel included at this school. Staff identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have received training about how to adapt their teaching. This has had a positive impact on their practice and on the pupils who need the most support. The school has ensured that more of the information that staff require about pupils' needs is readily available. Pupils with SEND, and disadvantaged pupils, now learn the curriculum with greater success. Pupils who have

fallen behind their peers in relation to their reading benefit from personalised support. They quickly improve their confidence and reading fluency.

The school helps pupils to understand what respectful behaviour looks like. Pupils demonstrate this well. Most pupils attend well. The school carefully monitors pupils' attendance and considers the reasons why a small number of pupils, including some of the most vulnerable pupils, do not attend as often as they should. The school has worked hard to remove any barriers to these pupils' attendance. As a result, they attend school more often.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They are knowledgeable about the fundamental British values and their importance. The school prioritises teaching pupils about respecting difference and this work is reflected in pupils' attitudes and actions. Pupils receive helpful guidance about careers and next steps. A small number of pupils would appreciate further guidance about the world of work. While pupils develop their social and moral understanding well, they do not benefit as consistently from opportunities to develop their spiritual understanding. Leaders are aware of these issues and are acting effectively to resolve them.

Sixth-form students receive an excellent personal development offer. They take up leadership roles, contribute to the life of the school and develop the skills and knowledge they need for life beyond school. For example, students complete courses in first aid and in teaching English as a foreign language. The school takes a caring and thorough approach to preparing students for their next steps. Students appreciate this and understand the options available to them when they leave school.

Staff enjoy working at the school. There is a culture of teamwork and ambition. Staff appreciate the consideration given to their workload and well-being. The trust, those responsible for governance and the school, work together closely to promote the 'be kind, work hard, aspire' values of the school to the benefit of staff and pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, pupils do not receive the guidance or learning opportunities they need to move their learning on, including when attempting to learn the most complex aspects of the school's ambitious curriculum. As a result, there are occasions when pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that pupils consistently benefit from opportunities to learn successfully the school's ambitious curriculum.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138191
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10379571
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	1028
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	146
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ann Witheford
CEO of the trust	Lisa Walton
Headteacher	Halina Angus
Website	www.southwolds.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 December 2019, under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the East Midlands Educational Trust.
- The school currently makes use of four registered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements

(quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, staff, the CEO, the chair of trustees and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, art and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development. They also met with leaders responsible for the provision for pupils with SEND, the provision for disadvantaged pupils and alternative provision.
- Inspectors met formally and informally with groups of pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses received on Parent View, including free-text responses. They also considered responses to the Ofsted surveys for school staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Matthew Fearn-Davies, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector
Jon Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Burton	Ofsted Inspector

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