

Sutton Community Academy

Address: High Pavement, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, NG17 1EE

Unique reference number (URN): 139063

Inspection report: 21 April 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Attendance is a clear priority for leaders and is managed through well-established systems. Staff understand their role in promoting regular attendance and work closely with pupils and families to reduce barriers. Attendance has improved over time, and this improvement is evident across many pupil groups. Leaders use information effectively to identify patterns of absence and to provide targeted support where needed. Pupils say that adults encourage them to attend regularly and help them to understand the importance of being in school. However, attendance is not consistently high for all pupils, particularly for some who face ongoing challenges.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is typically calm and orderly. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, creating a respectful and purposeful environment. Expectations are clear and applied consistently by staff. Pupils understand behaviour routines and describe them as fair. When pupils' behaviour falls short of expectations, staff respond promptly and pupils receive appropriate support. Over time, behaviour has improved and the number of negative incidents has reduced. Pupils value the rewards that they receive, especially the Friday disco, in recognition of positive conduct and contribution to school life. These reinforce a sense of pride and shared responsibility.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed an ambitious and well-organised curriculum that is carefully sequenced to help pupils build knowledge and understanding over time. Curriculum plans make clear what pupils should learn and when, and leaders work closely with subject teams to review and refine provision. As a result, pupils experience a broad curriculum that supports their learning and prepares them for future stages of education.

Teaching is grounded in clear routines and consistent expectations. In many lessons, teachers present subject content clearly and use effective modelling and questioning to support learning. Pupils are generally engaged and can explain what they are learning and why. Leaders provide extensive learning opportunities for staff, which strengthens their subject knowledge and improves classroom practice.

However, the quality of teaching is not consistently high quality across subjects and year groups. In some lessons, activities do not check pupils' understanding closely enough or support them to apply knowledge independently. In addition, approaches to adapting learning for pupils who need additional support vary between teachers. This limits how effectively some pupils access the curriculum and make progress over time.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of these strengths and weaknesses. This work is strengthening teaching consistency and improving how well pupils are supported to learn across subjects.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have established clear systems to identify, assess and support pupils who face barriers to their learning or wellbeing. These systems are understood by staff and enable pupils with additional needs, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care, to access appropriate support. Pupils say that they feel cared for and that adults know them well. As a result, most pupils feel included and supported in day-to-day school life.

Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to secure timely support. They act quickly to ensure that needs are identified and provision is in place. The school's records are thorough, and communication with parents and carers and professionals supports shared understanding between all those involved in supporting pupils. For many pupils, this reduces barriers and improves pupils' engagement with learning and school life.

Although systems are typically secure, leaders do not currently evaluate the impact of their work as sharply as they could. Information about the support that pupils receive is not consistently analysed to check that provision is improving pupils' progress over time. In addition, agreed strategies to support pupils are not implemented consistently well by all staff. This reduces the impact of leaders' intended support for pupils.

Leaders understand these weaknesses and are taking appropriate action to improve teaching consistency and the rigour of their evaluation. As this work is embedded more securely, inclusion is well placed to strengthen further and ensure that all pupils thrive.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders serve with clear moral purpose and are deeply committed to ensuring that all pupils are safe, included and supported to achieve as well as they can. They know the school and its community well and make decisions consistently in pupils' best interests. Staff, pupils and parents describe leaders as visible, approachable and determined to improve pupils' experiences and outcomes.

Leaders have a clear and honest understanding of the school's strengths and areas that still require continued focus. They evaluate provision carefully and have secured noticeable improvement across many aspects of the school's work. This includes strengthening the school's culture, improving behaviour and attendance, and developing a curriculum that raises pupils' confidence and aspirations. Leaders are not complacent and recognise precisely where further work is needed to sustain and deepen this progress.

Those responsible for governance provide appropriate challenge and support. Governance is well organised and statutory duties are met. Governors and trust leaders understand their roles clearly and hold leaders to account using a range of information. At the same time, they support leaders to make difficult decisions when required, ensuring that pupils' welfare and education remain the priority.

Leaders have established effective systems to support staff's wellbeing and professional development. Staff feel valued and supported and share leaders' commitment to improving outcomes for pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from a personal development and wellbeing programme that supports them to build confidence, resilience and self-belief. They speak positively about relationships with staff and the pastoral support available for them. Pupils say that adults know them well and help them to manage challenges, which contributes to pupils' sense of belonging and emotional security.

Pupils learn how to stay safe, develop healthy relationships and understand the importance of respect and tolerance. They demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of online safety, mental wellbeing and wider risks. Pupils describe the school as a place where differences are accepted and discriminatory behaviour is challenged. Opportunities to take on responsibility help pupils to develop pride through their contribution to school life. These include student council involvement and support for younger pupils as reading mentors and breakfast club helpers.

A broad range of experiences enriches pupils' personal development. Pupils talk enthusiastically about clubs and activities that they attend, including sports clubs, creative writing, homework clubs and opportunities to use the gym after school. Enrichment days focused on areas such as engineering and science allow pupils to explore their interests beyond the classroom. Educational visits and residential experiences, such as the Year 7 adventure visit and the Year 9 residential, support pupils to develop independence and teamwork. Cultural experiences, including theatre visits and performances, also form part of this provision. Some pupils would welcome even more of these opportunities.

Careers education is growing. Pupils receive guidance through lessons, assemblies, careers days and an online careers platform. Work experience in Year 10 supports pupils to explore future pathways and make informed choices. While pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures is developing, it is not consistently secure across all year groups. Leaders recognise this and are refining provision to improve pupils' knowledge further.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Students in the post-16 provision are well supported and benefit from positive relationships with staff who know them as individuals. Leaders have ensured that study programmes are appropriate to students' needs and aspirations. Leaders make sure that students enrol on courses that carefully match their prior knowledge and future goals. As a result, students feel safe, supported and able to focus on their learning.

Teaching in the post-16 provision supports students to build knowledge and skills over time. Typically, students' achievement in examinations are close to the national average. Students say that staff are approachable and provide guidance that helps them to understand expectations and manage their workload. They are supported to develop effective study skills, including organising their time, meeting deadlines and preparing for assessments.

When students need additional help, leaders put appropriate support in place to reduce barriers to learning and promote continued engagement.

Careers education, information and advice supports students to make informed decisions about their next steps. Students can explain the pathways available to them and speak positively about the guidance that they receive through lessons, assemblies and personalised support. Leaders track students' destinations carefully. They act when further guidance is needed to ensure that students move on to suitable education, training or employment.

Leaders maintain clear expectations and effective safeguarding arrangements that mirror those in the main school.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Published results remain below national averages in several subjects and for some groups of pupils. Although leaders use assessment information to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and target support, it is too soon to see the impact of recent actions across the school. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress that they should from their starting points, particularly where teaching and curriculum implementation are less secure.

Leaders have taken appropriate action to improve outcomes. Pupils' day-to-day learning shows evidence of this. In lessons, pupils are engaged and can explain what they are studying. Leaders have prioritised strengthening foundational learning, including reading. This is beginning to support pupils' access to the curriculum more effectively. However, more time is needed to tell if this translates into routinely positive outcomes for pupils.

Leaders have a secure understanding of pupils' achievement and monitor pupils' progress closely. While improvements in learning are visible, their impact is not at present reflected in examination results.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are proud of their school and speak with confidence about what it offers them. They describe a positive sense of belonging and value the culture of care, respect and ambition that staff promote. Pupils appreciate that adults know them well and take time to support them personally and academically. As a result, pupils feel included, listened to and part of a community that encourages them to aim high.

Pupils engage well in their learning and generally enjoy lessons. They benefit from an ambitious and well-organised curriculum that helps them to build knowledge and develop confidence over time. The quality of pupils' work shows that learning is secured across many subjects. However, this classroom experience is not routinely reflected in pupils'

outcomes, particularly in some subjects and for some groups. This demonstrates that some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils feel safe because they are confident that adults will act to help them, particularly when they report concerns. They demonstrate a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including online and beyond school.

Behaviour across the school is typically calm and orderly. Pupils understand behaviour expectations and describe them as fair and consistently applied. Most pupils behave well in lessons, creating a purposeful learning environment. Pupils respond positively to rewards that recognise good behaviour, leadership and attendance, which helps to reinforce a shared sense of responsibility and pride in the school.

Pupils value the wider opportunities available to them, including chances to take on responsibility, support others and contribute to school life. Personal-development provision helps pupils to develop positive attitudes, respect for others and an understanding of future pathways. While pupils have some awareness of different faiths and cultures, this knowledge is not secure across all year groups. Leaders have identified this and have clear plans to strengthen it.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure greater consistency in teaching and use assessment information more effectively to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning.
 - Leaders should ensure that planned adaptations to teaching and resources for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are implemented consistently, so that pupils receive the intended support and adjustments that they need.
 - Leaders should carefully analyse information that they gather so that they can identify priorities accurately and evaluate the impact of actions taken to improve pupils' outcomes.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Academy Transformation Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark McCourt, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Patricia Beanland.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and trust leaders during the inspection.

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.

The school currently makes use of 6, unregistered, alternative provisions.

Since the previous inspection, the school has taken the decision to close the post 16 provision at the end of the academic year 2026.

Principal: Lewis Taylor

Lead inspector:

Nyree Parker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Susan Vasey, Ofsted Inspector

Alexandra Jane Burton, Ofsted Inspector

Stuart Anderson, Ofsted Inspector

Julie McBrearty, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

800

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

900

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

46.12%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.00%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

15.50%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	37.1%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	23.0%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	26.4%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	37.6	46.0	Below
2023/24 (final)	36.3	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	38.5	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.45	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.24	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	21.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	14.3%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	13.0%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	28.3	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	28.3	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	30.7	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.83	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.71	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	21.8%	53.1%	-31.3 pp
2023/24 (final)	14.3%	53.1%	-38.8 pp
2022/23 (final)	13.0%	52.4%	-39.5 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	28.3	50.4	-22.1
2023/24 (final)	28.3	50.0	-21.7

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	30.7	50.3	-19.6

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.83	0.16	-0.99
2022/23 (final)	-0.71	0.17	-0.88

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	86%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	92%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	91%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	26.39	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	24.18	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	29.60	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	-0.1	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.4	0.0	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	8.0%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.1%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	10.6%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	23.4%	21.9%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	28.5%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	30.4%	26.5%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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