

Inspection of Samworth Church Academy

Sherwood Hall Road, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 2DY

Inspection dates:	20 and 21 May 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The head of this school is Carl Bennett. This school is part of the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham Multi-Academy 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), Chris Moodie, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Hunter. There is also an executive principal, Clare Barber, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Warm and respectful relationships exist between staff and pupils in this school. Since the last inspection, pupils' behaviour has improved. The majority of pupils behave well during structured lesson times and sensibly during unstructured times, such as breaktimes and lunchtime. Pupils feel happy and safe at this school and are typically respectful towards each other. They feel confident to report any concerns about bullying they have to adults.

While expectations for pupils' behaviour have increased, expectations for pupils' achievement, particularly at key stages 3 and 4, are not high enough and some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Pupils' experience and learning in the classroom from Year 7 to Year 11 are too variable. In the sixth form, students experience a better quality of education and staff expectations of what students need to know and can do are higher.

The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. This includes mental health and well-being. Pupils learn to stay safe, to understand what constitutes healthy relationships and to appreciate diversity and different faiths.

Pupils can participate in many clubs and extra-curricular activities, including bushcraft, fencing, the combined cadet force, and musical performances. These opportunities nurture pupils' talents and interests.

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

The school offers an ambitious curriculum with a broad range of academic and vocational subjects. In each subject, the school has identified the most important knowledge pupils need to learn and in which order. However, this ambition is not reflected in published outcomes, which fall significantly below national averages.

Students in the sixth form benefit from effective curriculum delivery with strong teaching that supports their success. In contrast, pupils in key stage 3 and 4 experience inconsistencies in curriculum implementation. Sometimes, the work pupils are given lacks purpose. This limits how deeply pupils learn subject content and make connections in their learning. In Years 7 to 11, expectations are too variable, particularly in relation to the quality of pupils' work. Additionally, checks on pupils' understanding are not routinely effective. This leads to gaps in learning or misconceptions that persist over time.

Reading is a priority. Pupils who find reading more difficult are provided with targeted interventions. This approach ensures that these pupils receive the necessary help to catch up and develop their reading skills.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified accurately. While some pupils with SEND receive additional support from staff, in some subjects, staff do not make appropriate adaptations for these pupils to access the curriculum sufficiently well. This hinders learning. The school acknowledges these inconsistencies and has begun to address them. However, this work is still in its early stages.

Pupils behave well in class and around school. The school is calm and orderly. The number of suspensions is reducing. Pupils value the improved culture in the school. The school is working with families and pupils in a number of different ways to remove barriers to attending. However, some pupils miss too much of the curriculum. Rates of persistent absenteeism, although improving, are still too high, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils in school. This contributes to gaps in their knowledge.

The school supports pupils' personal development effectively through a well-structured personal, social and health education curriculum. Assemblies, drop-down days and enrichment opportunities enhance the tutor programme. This helps to prepare pupils for life in the wider community. Pupils develop leadership skills through a range of roles, such as student councillors, student captains and duty receptionists. These roles develop confidence and communication skills. Impartial careers guidance and work experience help pupils make informed choices about their future. Sixth-form students are particularly positive about the careers programme and support for their next steps in employment, education or training.

School and trust leaders are aware that the school needs to improve. However, their assessment of the school is overly generous, and their awareness and oversight of the school is not as strong as it could be. While there have been very recent and substantive changes to the executive board, members do not provide leaders with enough support and challenge. The school has started to ensure that staff have the necessary skills to bring about improvements. However, actions to address some of the long-standing weaknesses in the quality of education have been too slow and not had enough impact.

The school is currently navigating through a staff restructure. A minority of staff are concerned about the impact that leadership instability has had on their workload and well-being. That said, the majority of staff are proud and happy to work in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not implemented consistently well. Some teachers do not adapt what they teach in response to what pupils already know. They do not check pupils' understanding effectively. This means that, sometimes, pupils do not build on secure prior learning and do not develop the detailed knowledge they need to achieve well. This hinders how well some pupils learn and achieve. The school should ensure that teachers understand how to implement the curriculum consistently well, including that staff develop their knowledge of adaptive approaches, so that pupils embed

knowledge securely and can apply it fluently, and that staff effectively check that this knowledge is secure.

- Teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of the quality of work that pupils in key stages 3 and 4 produce. This is reflected in the accuracy and care of pupils' written work. The school should ensure that teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils and that pupils produce work to the best quality of which they are capable.
- The school's revised SEND offer is still in its early stages of implementation. This means some pupils with SEND do not receive the full support they need to succeed. Teachers do not adapt lessons well enough. The school must make sure that staff have the knowledge and skills they need to support pupils with SEND, so that these pupils can achieve well and be successful in all aspects of school life.
- Rates of persistent absenteeism, although improving, are still too high, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils in school. Some pupils miss too much of the curriculum and this leads to gaps in their knowledge. The school should continue to ensure that the strategies used to support pupils' attendance help overcome any barriers that they face. The school should make sure that pupils' attendance continues to improve.
- Trustees do not have a strong enough awareness and oversight of the school. While there have been very recent and substantive changes to the executive board, members do not provide leaders with enough support and challenge. Some of the improvements leaders have enacted have been implemented too slowly, particularly in relation to the quality of education pupils receive. The school should ensure that leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses so that issues can be addressed swiftly. The school should also ensure that leaders, including those responsible for governance, are held to account for the improvements that need to be made.

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	135583
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10379565
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1009
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	98
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Hunter
CEO of the trust	Chris Moodie
Principal	Carl Bennett (Head of school) Clare Barber (Executive principal)
Website	www.samworthchurchacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive board was formed in January 2025. The executive principal took up her post in February 2025. The head of school started in his role in April 2025.
- The school has a religious character. It is a Church of England school. The school received a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) in November 2019.
- The school has a provision at another site, Heatherdene, that a small number of pupils attend. Additionally, the school makes use of one unregistered provider of alternative provision.

- 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, art and design, science and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To further explore the effectiveness of the quality of education, inspectors reviewed the curriculum plans in two other subjects.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with a range of leaders, including the executive principal, head of school and other members of the senior leadership team.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with those responsible for governance, which included meetings with a range of trustees and members of the executive board, including the CEO.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors considered the responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils and spent time with pupils at social times to observe behaviour and talk to pupils about their experiences of life in school. Inspectors observed the start of the school day routines.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents and records linked to attendance and behaviour, as well as school improvement documentation and minutes of executive board meetings.

Inspection team

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