

Inspection of Quarrydale Academy

Stoneyford Road, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire NG17 2DU

Inspection dates:	7 and 8 May 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Sixth-form provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Tim Paling. This school is a single academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jill Wildsmith.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school provides a caring environment for pupils. Staff are hardworking and committed to providing pupils with the support they need. Pupils feel safe. The school's pastoral offer is strong. Parents and carers appreciate the 'lovely teachers' and the 'supportive' approach that the school takes. However, parents rightly recognise that some pupils do not behave or achieve as well as they should.

The school does have high aspirations for pupils. However, the quality of education provided varies in quality. The school does not consistently ensure that pupils engage purposefully in their learning or take pride in their work.

Some pupils hear derogatory language in school on a regular basis. The school does encourage pupils to respect difference. The work to realise this goal does not have the desired impact for some pupils. The school provides pupils with some opportunities to broaden their horizons, including trips to Paris and the chance for sixth-form students to mentor their younger peers.

Although sixth-form students do not receive consistently high-quality support in relation to their personal development and academic work, they do appreciate the respectful environment in which they learn. They form positive relationships with staff. Some students leave school well prepared for their next steps.

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

In most subjects, the school has developed a coherent and ambitious curriculum. Generally, learning is sequenced well, and this helps teachers to support pupils to build their knowledge successfully and produce high-quality work. However, there are some subjects in which the curriculum is not as carefully sequenced or ambitious. Where this is the case, teachers are less clear about the key knowledge that they want pupils to learn and their expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high. As a result, some pupils do not recall their learning or develop a secure understanding of important concepts and subject-specific vocabulary.

Staff do not consistently provide activities that enable pupils to learn the ambitious aims of the curriculum. Similarly, the school has not ensured that teachers identify and address gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge. Sometimes, the learning is moved on before pupils have gained the knowledge they need. This limits how well pupils are able to learn.

Staff are caring and inclusive. The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) promptly. Teachers use the helpful information the school provides, to adapt their teaching successfully for pupils with SEND. However, the weaknesses in the teaching of the curriculum mean that pupils with SEND have the same variable achievement as their peers.

The school recognises when pupils need extra help with their reading. Pupils receive personalised support and develop the fluency of their reading.

There have been some improvements in behaviour since the previous inspection. Most pupils know the importance of behaving well. They move around the school calmly and take pride in their work. However, some pupils do not behave sensibly around the school site and do not arrive on time at their lessons. The school has not ensured that staff implement the school's behaviour policy consistently. More recently, staff have received training to help them in their management of behaviour. This has provided greater clarity as to how pupils should behave and the actions that staff should take when pupils do not live up to these expectations.

The school has prioritised pupils' attendance. Staff have analysed the barriers to attendance. They have taken effective action to remove those barriers. Pupils attend well. The attendance of students in the sixth form has improved, but some students still do not attend regularly enough.

Pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they should be. They have not developed secure knowledge of fundamental British values or major world faiths and religions. Some pupils take advantage of the clubs that the school provides but many do not. The school provides pupils with some helpful advice and guidance about next steps and careers. However, the sharing of this guidance has not been organised carefully enough to ensure that pupils, and students in the sixth form, enjoy a consistently high-quality offer.

The school has begun to evaluate the impact of its strategies to bring about improvement in some areas of the provision. Where this is the case, pupils' experiences of school have improved. In those areas where the school's evaluation is less precise, the school has begun to consider what needs to improve. However, this work is in the early stages. Generally, staff feel well supported and valued by the school. However, some staff feel that they need more support, including to manage their workload.

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 expectations of what pupils should achieve in their lessons are not consistently high. As a result, pupils do not routinely benefit from work which enables them to learn the ambitious aims of the curriculum. The school should ensure that teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide work which enables pupils to be able to learn the ambitious curriculum well.

- The school has not ensured that teachers consistently identify and address gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge. As a result, teachers move learning on before pupils have the knowledge they need. This can limit how well pupils develop a secure understanding over time. The school should ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding to inform the decisions they make about when to move learning on and when to provide pupils with further support.
- The school has not ensured that staff consistently apply the school's behaviour policy. As a result, some pupils do not display positive and respectful attitudes to the school and to their education. The school should ensure that staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently and confidently.
- The personal development offer does not provide pupils with the knowledge they need in relation to fundamental British values, spiritual and cultural education and protected characteristics. As a result, pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they should be. The school should ensure that pupils are provided with meaningful opportunities to learn about difference and what it means to respect difference, so that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school's evaluation of the impact of its strategies to bring about improvement is not sufficiently precise across all areas of the provision. This has resulted in the impact of these strategies being limited in some areas. The school should ensure that the evaluation of its work to bring about improvement has the desired positive impact across the whole provision so that pupils achieve 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](#)' 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	137857
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10379570
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	1275
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	113
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jill Wildsmith
Headteacher	Tim Paling
Website	www.quarrydale.notts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 November 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses six unregistered 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued 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 and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, geography, physical education and social sciences. 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 with the leader responsible for provision in the sixth form, visited sixth-form lessons and met with groups of sixth-form students.
- 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 Ofsted's 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
Stuart Anderson	Ofsted Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector
Damian Painton	Ofsted Inspector
Gulbanu Kader	Ofsted Inspector
Jules Gordon	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2025