

Inspection of The Holgate Academy

Hillcrest Drive, Hucknall, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG15 6PX

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 June 2024

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

The principal of this school is Henry Diamond. The executive principal is Heather Widdup. This school is part of the Diverse Academies 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), David Cotton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael Quigley.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is improving. Pupils benefit from an environment that is calm and suitable for learning. Aspirations for what pupils can achieve are high. Attendance is slowly rising. However, there is more work to do before all pupils attend school well and receive a consistently high quality of education.

Relationships between pupils and staff are mainly respectful. Interactions between pupils during social times are usually positive. Pupils' conduct is getting better. They know how they should behave and an increasing number of pupils meet these expectations. However, there are some inconsistencies in how staff manage pupils' behaviour.

Many pupils want to do well, although some do not commit fully to their learning and avoid completing work. Lessons are sometimes disrupted by some pupils' poor behaviour. Pupils who struggle to engage with their learning are often given support. This help is starting to make a positive difference.

Weekly 'futures' lessons teach pupils how to look after themselves and stay safe. Their understanding of what it means to live in modern Britain is improving.

Students in the sixth form get a good deal. They value the expertise of their teachers and enjoy their studies. They appreciate the advice and guidance available when planning their next steps.

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

The school, supported by the trust, has worked hard to improve its culture and raise aspirations of what pupils can achieve. Leaders' keen focus on the right priorities is continuing to improve the school. However, some of this work is recent. It has not had enough time to have a sustained impact on the school's practices, or on pupils' experiences and achievements. As a result, while the school is getting better, it still requires further improvements.

Pupils study a broad range of academic and vocational subjects, including in the sixth form. The curriculum is well thought out in the majority of these subjects. Teachers know what pupils need to learn and how this links to what has been taught before.

There are variations in how well the curriculum is taught. Agreed whole-school approaches aimed at supporting pupils with their learning are beginning to make a positive difference. However, some staff do not use these strategies consistently. Activities designed to help pupils remember important information are improving their recall. However, teachers' questions do not always check pupils' understanding carefully enough. Learning sometimes moves on before pupils are ready. While some pupils secure their knowledge, others struggle to achieve as well as they should.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is slowly improving. Training is helping staff to gain a better understanding of these pupils' needs. However, teachers do not always adapt the curriculum well enough for these pupils. Some pupils with SEND follow part-time programmes or attend alternative provisions. While these arrangements help some of these pupils to re-engage with education, others are at risk of falling behind.

Pupils' reading skills are checked to identify those who struggle to read well. Effective support helps these pupils improve their reading accuracy and fluency. Opportunities for pupils to share their ideas with others are helping to improve their oral skills.

Students in the sixth form enjoy positive relationships with staff and attend school well. They value being taught by knowledgeable subject specialists. These teachers present new information clearly. They use pertinent questions to help students secure their understanding of high-level concepts. Students learn important life skills, such as managing their finances and keeping themselves safe. Appropriate guidance helps most students move on to suitable education, training or employment.

The school's determined approach to improving attendance is helping pupils come to school more often. However, the attendance of some pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable, is still too low.

Well-planned initiatives are helping to improve pupils' behaviour. The 'hub' offers pupils a safe space where they can get support. The 'opportunity to succeed' curriculum gives them an extra chance to change their conduct while they learn. However, the number of pupils suspended from school remains high.

A recent review has improved the personal development programme, although its implementation is not yet consistent. All pupils in key stage 3 now study religious education. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and understand why it is important to respect others. The school's careers education and guidance is comprehensive.

Most staff enjoy working at the school and feel well supported. They are enthusiastic about the changes to improve the school, although a few say their workload has increased as a result.

Some parents and carers recognise the positive changes that are happening in school. However, others do not feel listened to and say their children are not supported well enough.

Ongoing support from the trust, and from other external organisations, is giving the school the impetus it needs to make the changes necessary. Trustees and local governors are determined that pupils at the school get the quality of education they deserve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are variations in how well the curriculum is implemented. Teachers' pedagogical choices are not always suitably ambitious. They do not always check pupils' knowledge effectively enough to plug gaps or deepen learning. These inconsistencies mean that some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The school must make sure that the curriculum is delivered consistently well in each subject and across all key stages.
- The provision for pupils with SEND is inconsistent. Staff are not sufficiently well informed about the needs of these pupils. They do not always adapt the curriculum well enough to meet these pupils' needs. Some pupils with SEND struggle to access a curriculum that is suitably ambitious. The school must ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills they need so that pupils with SEND benefit from the help they need to be successful.
- Pupils' attendance is improving. Despite this, too many pupils, particularly pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, are either absent from school too often or follow part-time programmes. These pupils miss out on important learning and on wider school experiences. The school needs to continue its work so that the attendance of pupils improves.
- Work to improve pupils' behaviour is making a positive difference. However, some pupils struggle to meet the school's behaviour expectations. Too many pupils are suspended from school or access their education away from their peers. The school needs to ensure that staff manage behaviour consistently and that all pupils get the support they need to behave well.
- Recent changes to the school's personal development programme are helping to improve pupils' resilience and independence. However, some pupils lack confidence in their own abilities. They avoid engaging fully with activities during lessons. They wait for teachers to give them the right answers, rather than risk making a mistake. The school needs to help pupils develop the skills they need to commit fully to their studies.
- The school is ambitious for what pupils can achieve. However, this vision has not been communicated effectively to all parents so that it can be realised in full. Some parents do not think their views are listened to or taken into consideration, particularly parents of pupils with SEND. The school needs to ensure that all stakeholders feel listened to and know about the positive work taking place to improve the school.

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	139956
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10298499
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1,237
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	78
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Quigley
CEO	David Cotton
Principal	Heather Widdup (Executive principal) Henry Diamond (Principal)
Website	www.holgate-ac.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diverse Academies Trust.
- The school's principal took up the role in October 2023, having previously been the head of school. There have been several other appointments to the school's senior leadership team since June 2023.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 11 are educated at the school's main site. The sixth-form provision at Hucknall Sixth Form Centre is provided in collaboration with other local schools. The centre is located at Portland Road, Hucknall, Nottingham NG15 7SN.
- 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 uses the services of one registered alternative provision and 13 unregistered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 principal and the executive principal, as well as other senior school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with those responsible for governance, including a trustee and the chair of the local governing body. She also met with the CEO of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into the following subjects: mathematics, science, geography, art, drama and French. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, spoke with teachers and pupils, looked at samples of pupils' work and visited lessons. They also listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult. On the second day of the inspection, inspectors examined the curriculum in a wider range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from a range of different year groups, including pupils with SEND. Inspectors spoke with pupils informally and observed their behaviour during social times.
- Inspectors visited some tutor sessions and attended an assembly.
- Inspectors visited the school's 'opportunity-to-succeed' provision. They spoke on the telephone with representatives of four of the unregistered providers used by the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the results of Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, parents 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 reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan and information about governance. Inspectors also

considered information about pupils' attendance and behaviour and the wider curriculum.

Inspection team

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Sadler	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Roche	Ofsted Inspector
Jeremy Spencer	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Davies	Ofsted Inspector

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