

Inspection of Rushcliffe Spencer Academy

Boundary Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG2 7BW

Inspection dates:	13 and 14 May 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The head of school is Sarah Sismey. This school is part of The Spencer 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), Paul West, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Donna Kinderman. There is also an executive principal, Graeme Smith, who is responsible for this school and one other.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since February 2014.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has a vision that 'everyone will be given the chance to shine brightly'. This aim underpins this highly ambitious and very inclusive school. The school has high expectations for all pupils' achievement. Pupils respond to these expectations brilliantly.

Pupils have shown incredible resilience throughout the extensive building work at the school. The high standards staff set for pupils and the presence of consistent routines ensure that the school remains a calm and focused learning environment. Pupils' conduct in lessons and around the school is impressive. Lessons are calm and purposeful.

Staff teach the very carefully designed curriculum with skill and precision. This helps all pupils to excel. Pupils and sixth-form students are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps, reflected in their very high attainment in published outcomes.

Wide-ranging enhancements to the curriculum, including an array of trips and visits, help pupils secure a deep understanding of life in modern Britain. These enhancements also develop pupils' knowledge of being a global citizen. Pupils enjoy considerable opportunities to extend their talents and interests. For example, they benefit greatly from a broad range of clubs and school events, such as musicals.

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

The school has designed a highly ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils are carefully guided to learn the most important knowledge in all subjects. Staff achieve this by researching and fully evaluating the effectiveness of their subjects' curriculums. This helps all pupils and students to develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve exceptionally well.

Staff have expert subject knowledge. They share resources and best practice from across the school. Teachers deliver lessons that build on what pupils know and can do. They explain concepts clearly to pupils and design activities to ensure that pupils have ample opportunity to recall previous learning. This greatly benefits pupils' understanding.

Teachers' checks on learning help them to track pupils' progress through the curriculum. They use the information gained from these checks to provide pupils with timely, tailored support within lessons. Pupils use feedback from teachers to reflect on what they have done well and how they can continue to improve. The 'boost' lessons are well used by pupils to refine their work further. As a result, many pupils produce very high-quality work. These high standards are also seen in the sixth form, where the quality of students' work is often exceptional.

The school is skilled at identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Useful, targeted training ensures that staff have a strong understanding of how to adapt their teaching to meet a range of needs.

The school's literacy development is exemplary and is embedded across the curriculum through a whole-school approach. It ensures that pupils read at an age-appropriate level and fluency. Effective reading interventions help pupils become confident readers.

Pupils are keen to attend school because they value the education they receive. While at school they are very inclusive and respectful of each other, staff and visitors. Staff provide caring and nurturing support for pupils who struggle to attend due to school-based anxiety. These pupils make good progress because of the strong relationships they have with staff.

The school provides a huge range of excellent opportunities for pupils to develop as responsible and active citizens. Philosophy and ethics lessons and carefully crafted tutor time discussions enable pupils to explore what they think about a range of topics, issues and current affairs. They learn about the fundamental British values and develop an appreciation of different religions, world views and cultures. 'Bright days' encourage pupils across all key stages to celebrate diversity and develop their social awareness. The 'Esperanza festival' allows pupils to contribute positively to society through significant fundraising. Pupils are very proud of the extra-curricular offer and there is a strong take up of these opportunities. There is a staggering enrichment offer for students in the sixth form. These opportunities promote students' personal development and help them to become confident, well-rounded individuals. The excellent and highly valued careers provision prepares pupils and sixth-form students well for their next steps.

The school provides many opportunities for staff to develop their expertise. Staff are committed to improving themselves and refuse to stand still. They feel well supported. They appreciate the effort made to reduce their workload and improve their well-being. The actions of school and trust leaders to continually improve the school are highly effective. This has ensured that pupils continue to experience an excellent education while at Rushcliffe Spencer Academy.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	138482
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10347538
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	2,033
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	444
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Donna Kinderman
CEO of the trust	Paul West
Principal	Graeme Smith (executive principal)
Website	www.rushcliffespencer.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2014 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Spencer Academies Trust.
- The school uses four unregistered alternative provisions and two 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 executive principal, the head of school and other senior and curriculum leaders. The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust, the chair and vice-chair of the board of trustees, trust leaders and some governors.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, social sciences, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages, science and physical education. They met with subject leaders and teachers. They visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors visited lessons in other subjects and looked at further examples of pupils' work. They also visited lessons across the sixth-form provision.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and at other times around school.
- 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 took note of the responses received on Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments and considered the results of Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Dave Gilkerson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Peter Monk	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Horrocks	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Sammy	Ofsted Inspector

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