

School report

Holgate Academy

Hillcrest Drive, Hucknall, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG15 6PX

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders', including governors', view of aspects of the school is too generous. School improvement planning is not sharp enough to drive improvement.
- Governors have not ensured that the pupil premium funding is having the required impact on eligible pupils' outcomes.
- Successive cohorts of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and boys, have made insufficient progress. Standards are beginning to improve but are not yet good.
- Teachers do not consistently comply with the whole-school assessment and feedback policy. Some pupils do not receive the guidance from their teachers that they should.
- Teachers do not routinely plan learning that is well enough matched to pupils' needs. At times, too much attention is paid to the learning activities and not enough to the knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils require in order to progress as they should.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across departments or within departments.
- Some teachers' expectations of pupils are not sufficiently high. This can negatively impact on pupils' behaviour and the quality of their work.
- Although attendance is improving at key stage 3 and is good within the sixth form, the proportion of key stage 4 pupils absent from school is still too high.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders' determined actions to reduce pupil exclusion are highly effective. The number of pupils excluded from the school has dramatically reduced.
- The Spring Learning Centre, the alternative provision within the school, is successfully supporting pupils to attend the school and continue their education.
- The 16-19 study programmes are good, due to effective leadership of the sixth form and some high-quality specialist teaching.
- Middle leaders, including those new to the role, are beginning to improve the quality of provision. Progress is improving.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leaders and the governing body by:
 - ensuring a systematic and rigorous approach to assessing accurately the school's strengths and weaknesses, including in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - ensuring that school improvement planning is focused on the key improvement priorities, that targets and timescales are ambitious, and that rigorous checks and time-lines are in place to ensure the required impact
 - increasing the rigour with which governors and leaders at all levels check that improvement planning, including for disadvantaged pupils, is making the difference needed.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupil and post-16 student outcomes improve by:
 - making sure that teachers use information from accurate assessments to plan learning that meets pupils' learning needs appropriately
 - making sure high standards and expectations of teaching and learning are shared and practised consistently across all subject teams, including in the sixth form
 - making sure that all teachers comply with the marking and feedback policy.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that all teachers engage pupils in their learning and follow the school policies to eliminate low-level disruption.
- Improve pupils' attendance, particularly in key stage 4.

External reviews of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, senior leaders and governors have not provided the leadership and direction needed to ensure that provision for pupils continues to be good. Although there have been some improvements, particularly in the reduction in pupil exclusion, the quality of teaching is too variable and does not promote consistently good progress.
- Leaders' views of aspects of the school, particularly the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupil outcomes, are overly generous. School improvement planning, including for the pupil premium strategy, is not precisely focused, monitored or evaluated. At times, the information that leaders produce can lead to confusion because it is insufficiently clear or is too extensive.
- The trust provides rich opportunities for leaders and teachers to engage in professional development activities, including subject networks and training from nationally recognised experts. It has put in place highly productive in-school support, including for leadership. The trust's school improvement support and challenge, however, have not successfully ensured an accurate view of provision or appropriate school-improvement planning.
- Leaders know the community the school serves extremely well. They are aware of the importance of keeping parents and carers well informed about their child. Every effort is taken to involve them in the life of the school, particularly those parents that may not have had a positive experience of school themselves. However, parents' views of the school are still mixed.
- Leaders are passionate to ensure that the school is truly inclusive and meets the needs of the community it serves. The steps taken to reduce pupil exclusion, including the in-school provision of the Spring Learning Centre, have been highly effective. Pupil exclusion, including permanent exclusion, has dramatically reduced.
- Middle leadership is an emerging strength. These leaders are developing the skills needed to make a marked improvement in their respective areas.
- Leaders have ensured a curriculum that provides a wealth of opportunity to study across a range of subjects. Great thought is taken so that pupils study appropriate qualifications, particularly at key stage 4. Pupil outcomes in the 'open' element of the key stage 4 curriculum are improving.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is now being used effectively. Pupils receive individualised and high-quality support, including within the Accelerated Learning Centre. Pupils are making better progress to catch up with their peers in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders have ensured that the additional funding to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is used appropriately. The learning needs of these pupils are known well, and appropriate support is in place. They make secure progress.
- Pupils benefit from a personal, social, health and citizenship programme of study. This plays an important role in contributing to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development. They gain rich opportunities to be prepared well for life in modern Britain, for example, through extra-curricular activities, clubs and visits. Pupils said they valued the many opportunities they had to develop their leadership skills within the school, including membership of the 'house council', and being 'peer mentors' and 'support buddies.' They said it made them feel proud of their school.

- Newly qualified teachers benefit from a bespoke programme of development and support. This is highly valuable as it is helping them to develop the skills and knowledge required of effective practitioners.
- Leaders have successfully improved the key stage 2 to key stage 3 transition processes. Pupils settle well into their new school. Their learning and personal development, behaviour and welfare needs are known well, and appropriate provision implemented. Pupils' attendance in Year 7 is good.

Governance of the school

- Governors have believed the school to be better than it is. They have not challenged leaders sufficiently to ensure that provision within the school continues to be good. Leaders have not helped this situation, because the strategic documents produced for governors are not as clear as is needed.
- Governors have not made sure that the external funding to support disadvantaged pupils has the required impact for eligible pupils. Although fewer disadvantaged pupils are excluded from the school, some disadvantaged pupils do not achieve at the levels that they could.
- Members of the local academy board have shown a great deal of commitment to the school. They have helped to ensure financial stability. They have engaged in training to develop their governance skills. They recognise that further training is required, particularly to assess pupil outcome information.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, including for those pupils within the Spring Learning Centre. The checks carried out to ensure staff suitability are carried out correctly. The designated safeguarding leads have been appropriately trained, and appropriate policies are in place. The processes in place to safeguard pupils' safety and welfare are routinely monitored and checked by the trust.
- Staff receive good safeguarding training. They know well the processes to follow should they have a concern or if a pupil discloses important personal information to them. Pupils that require it receive timely and effective support, including from external agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good within subjects and across subject areas. This has a negative impact on the progress that pupils make.
- Teachers' planning for pupils' learning is inconsistent. In some lessons, the learning needs of pupils are not well enough met. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and boys.
- Leaders have developed a 'tool kit' for teaching. This document contains many activities that teachers may use to engage pupils in their learning. At times, some of the activities used by teachers are not sufficiently focused on the knowledge, understanding or skills that pupils need to acquire. Some pupils are moved on to the next task too quickly, without learning as they should. Some pupils routinely fail to complete the work set.
- The quality of the feedback that pupils receive from their teacher is not consistently strong. Some pupils receive valuable feedback from their teacher, for example in their English, science and geography lessons. However, some teachers do not comply with the whole-school or department marking and feedback policy. They do not provide the help that some pupils require to correct errors or misconceptions.
- Teachers' expectations of some pupils are too low. At times, poor-quality or careless work is accepted without challenge, particularly in the work of boys.
- Where teaching is stronger, teachers have good subject knowledge. They provide clear explanations and have high expectations of pupils' capabilities. In these lessons, pupils behave well and are interested in their learning. Inspectors observed many of the subject leaders exhibiting this positive practice.
- Teachers within the Accelerated Learning Centre find many imaginative, creative and focused approaches to ensure that pupils catch up with their peers in English and mathematics. They support those pupils well for whom a full-time timetable of learning can be overwhelming. Many pupils make strong progress in this provision and are helped to be well prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- Pupils are encouraged to read. The pupils that read to the inspector expressed genuine enthusiasm for reading and a love of books. They said that they regularly read outside of school and appreciate the wealth of fiction and non-fiction books available in the school library.
- Pupils are known well by their teachers. Many extensive efforts are made to ensure a positive learning climate.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils are developing the skills they need to become confident learners,

but this is not yet consistent across the school, particularly for some disadvantaged pupils and boys.

- Pupils are taught well how to keep themselves safe within the school and outside in the community. They told inspectors that they felt safe and that there were many members of staff that they could turn to if they had a problem or needed help. They said that bullying was rare and that if it did happen it would be dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.
- Many extra-curricular activities take place to provide pupils with more opportunities to develop a range of skills. For instance, pupils can learn French, robotics or acapella. They are also supported to be more physically active by playing a range of sports, including in athletic tournaments.
- Careers advice and guidance to pupils are comprehensive and support pupils' future decisions well. Pupils gain work experience and hear from external experts about further education, apprenticeships and career opportunities. Care is taken to ensure that pupils move appropriately on to the next stage in their learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' attitude in some lessons is poor. At times, pupils are off task and involved in low-level disruptive behaviour. This impedes some pupils' progress, including that of those involved in the disruption.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average. Although there are significant improvements in the attendance of key stage 3 pupils, pupils in key stage 4 do not attend school sufficiently regularly.
- The proportion of pupils that are routinely absent from school is above the national average. The persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND is similar to the national benchmark for these groups.
- Leaders' extensive efforts to reduce pupil exclusion have been highly effective. Pupil exclusion has fallen dramatically. Many more pupils are in school, are safe and are learning.
- The Spring Learning Centre provides high-quality in-school alternative provision. Many pupils have their learning needs met, including their literacy and numeracy needs, and are helped to make strong progress from their starting points.
- The vast majority of pupils are polite and conduct themselves in a positive manner. They are smart in their school uniform. Pupils are required to move across the school site outside and between buildings to their lessons. During the inspection, the weather was extremely poor. Pupils behaved sensibly and with respect under these difficult conditions.
- Where the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is high, pupils' behaviour and conduct are exemplary.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Progress for disadvantaged pupils has been significantly below the national average for other pupils for the last three years. Although there are some signs of improvement, disadvantaged pupils are continuing to underachieve, particularly boys.
- In 2016 and 2018, there was significant underachievement in humanities, modern foreign languages and science. In 2018, pupils underachieved in mathematics, and some pupils underachieved in English. Leaders' information predicts that current pupils' achievement will improve across this range of subjects in all year groups, including the current Year 11.
- The attainment of current Year 11 pupils is predicted by leaders to be close to national benchmarks across the eight subjects studied.
- Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work, from observations of learning and from leaders' information indicates that pupils in key stage 3 are now making more secure progress than was previously the case. This includes disadvantaged pupils.
- The proportions of pupils continuing in education or moving to employment have improved. The proportion of pupils not in employment, education or training is below the national average.
- Many pupils enter the school at key stage 3 with low literacy and numeracy levels. The Accelerated Learning Centre supports pupils well to acquire the skills needed to access the secondary curriculum and to progress.
- Pupils make strong progress within the 'open' curriculum. Many achieve well in the vocational subjects studied.
- Tremendous efforts are made to keep pupils in school and learning. Some pupils at risk of exclusion do not achieve as well as they should. However, they are supported to progress, develop skills and be prepared for the next appropriate step in their education, employment or training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership of the sixth form is strong. Leaders are highly ambitious and focused to absolutely make sure that students achieve well. They have an accurate view of the strengths and the weaknesses of the provision. Their actions have impacted positively to ensure continued improvement.
- Students told inspectors that they enjoyed their studies. They said that they were well supported in both their academic studies and their personal development. This is reflected in the high rates of student attendance and retention.
- Leaders determinedly provide impartial careers advice and guidance. Careers advice and guidance are strengths. Students value the information they receive and are well informed. Many students move on to the appropriate next stage in their education, employment or training, including to higher education and apprenticeships.

- The small number of students that have not gained an appropriate GCSE pass in English and mathematics receive suitable teaching and support. As a result, they make good progress.
- All students follow appropriate personalised study programmes. A rigorous admissions process ensures that students are studying the correct programme that builds appropriately on their prior learning, interests and aspirations. The demands of the 16 to 19 study programme are met.
- A strong personal development programme is provided. Students' safety and well-being are key priorities. Extensive actions are taken so that students gain the support required to focus successfully on their studies. This includes support for students' mental health, including counselling if required.
- Over time, value-added outcomes have improved and are predicted by leaders to improve further in 2019. Disadvantaged students' achievement is better than that of their peers. Leaders have rightly identified raising the attainment of the most able students as a priority. Appropriate plans are in place to address this.
- Opportunities for students to undertake work experience enhance their understanding and are appropriately linked to their interests and aspirations. The wider development opportunities offered to students are extensive and include trips outside the community and the chance to take part in national events such as in debating. Many students' personal development records are brimming with high-quality information.
- The weekly post-16 bulletin is an exceptionally helpful document that includes study tips, challenges and opportunities for additional curricular research. Students said that they appreciated the efforts taken to produce this and said that they found it valuable.
- Some of the teaching within the sixth form is expert and ensures that students progress well. Teaching is particularly strong in English, mathematics and business studies. Improvements have also been seen in the teaching of history. However, the quality of teaching in some subjects is not consistently strong.

School details

Unique reference number	139956
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10086729

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	963
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	97
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Rolph
Principal	Sue Forsey
Telephone number	01159 632104
Website	http://www.holgate-ac.org.uk/
Email address	info@holgate-ac.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 July 2015

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary comprehensive school.
- The school is part of the Diverse Academies Learning Partnership.
- The school is part of the Trent Valley Teaching School Alliance.
- 16–19 provision is shared with two other schools within the trust. The provision is based at the Hucknell Sixth Form Centre.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.

- The proportion of pupils receiving SEN support or with an education, health and care plan is lower than the national average.
- The school runs an alternative provision, The Spring Learning Centre. This provision caters for pupils within the school, the trust and the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 42 lessons, across a range of subjects and in key stages 3, 4 and 5. Most lessons were observed jointly with leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and samples of work in Years 8, 9, 10 and 11. They reviewed the work of students in Years 12, 13 and 14.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings including with the principal, senior and middle leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the lead for careers information and guidance, and other staff within the school. The lead inspector spoke with members of the local academy board, including the chair.
- The lead inspector met with the vice-chair of trustees and the senior executive leader responsible for school improvement.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, before school and during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke formally with pupils in key stages 3 and 4 and post-16 students. Inspectors also spoke with pupils and students more informally in lessons and at breaktime.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, its improvement plans, information about the attainment and progress of pupils, records in relation to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, and information on the school's website. They evaluated the effectiveness of the use of external funds to the school, including the pupil premium. An inspector checked the school's single central register and the school's system for recruiting staff, including staff files.
- Inspectors considered the 84 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. There were 49 responses to the staff surveys. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

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Nigel Boyd	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Ward	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Colling	Ofsted Inspector
Vondra Mays	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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