

Inspection of Sir Christopher Hatton Academy

The Pyghtle, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 4RP

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2022

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

This school was last inspected seven years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders believe that pupils should 'aim for excellence' in every aspect of school life. Most pupils rise to this challenge. They have positive attitudes and are keen to learn. They value the high-quality support they receive from staff. They are aspirational about their futures. Many pupils, particularly pupils at key stage 4 and sixth-form students, achieve success. As one parent typically explained, 'Every pupil is given support to achieve their potential.'

Most pupils show respect for others and conduct themselves well. They act as 'upstanders' when someone needs their support. Staff resolve incidents of bullying swiftly. Occasionally, the behaviour of a small minority of pupils disrupts the learning and social times of others. Pupils say that a few staff do not respond consistently to incidents of poor behaviour.

Staff encourage pupils to push themselves beyond their comfort zones. Pupils often exhibit 'Hatton character qualities', such as resilience and leadership. Some join the combined cadet force while others take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. A wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities also help develop pupils' characters. For instance, pupils learn to juggle, practise debating or study astronomy. Pupils embrace diversity.

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

The curriculum in each subject is well thought out, including in the sixth form. Subject leaders consider carefully what they want pupils to learn and when. They build curriculums that become more complex over time. They include essential vocabulary that pupils need to know to enhance their knowledge. Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 study a wide range of subjects.

Teachers are subject experts. They use their in-depth knowledge to make helpful links between what pupils know already and new information. Teachers choose resources that are well suited to the intended learning.

Pupils in key stage 4 and post-16 students can recall what they have learned previously. They use this knowledge as the foundation on which to build. Teachers check closely what these pupils have learned. They ask these pupils searching questions and identify topics that need reinforcement. Teachers provide these pupils with useful advice that helps them deepen their knowledge. Most key-stage-4 pupils and sixth-form students achieve extremely well in their external examinations.

The implementation of the key-stage-3 curriculum is not as consistently strong in a few subjects as it is in others. Teachers' expectations of what pupils at key stage 3 can achieve vary. In some subjects, teachers do not pay close enough attention to pupils' specific learning needs. Some pupils at this level sometimes struggle to

remember essential knowledge. Their work is occasionally inaccurate, presented poorly or incomplete.

Leaders check every pupils' ability to read when they join the school. Some pupils get extra help, so that they can read with confidence and accuracy. There are lots of opportunities for every pupil to read and many are keen to do so. They enjoy choosing their own reading books from different genres, eras and cultures.

The sixth-form provision is exceptional. Students enjoy the challenges offered by a demanding curriculum. Their positive attitudes and commitment to learning underpin their high achievements. Students are very well prepared to take their next steps into adulthood. Almost all secure appropriate education, training or employment placements when they move on.

Most pupils get on well together. They show each other and staff respect. When pupils behave poorly, they spend time reflecting on how they might act differently. This process helps many, but not all, pupils to improve their conduct. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are both rising back towards pre-pandemic levels.

Leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development is far-reaching. Pupils enjoy an extensive range of sporting, creative and cultural experiences. They have a comprehensive appreciation of diversity and inclusion. Pupils took part in a colour run for Pride. Boys spoke about their feelings as part of the 'Smile' project. All pupils marked the start of Black History Month at a flag-raising ceremony. Pupils learn about healthy relationships. They know how to stay physically fit and mentally well. High-quality careers provision helps pupils make informed decisions about their next steps.

Almost all staff are proud to work at the school. Most feel well supported. A changed approach to marking and feedback has helped to reduce staff workload.

Senior leaders are forward thinking. They continually strive to improve the school. Their support for disadvantaged pupils is particularly effective. Trustees are very well informed. They provide rigorous challenge and support to help leaders achieve their vision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders of safeguarding are knowledgeable. They pay close attention to pupils who are at risk of potential harm. They make sure that these pupils get the help they need. Leaders carry out immediate risk assessments if a pupil is particularly vulnerable.

Staff are well trained. They follow the school's safeguarding procedures closely. They know they must act promptly if they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare or safety.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe in the local community. They learn about, for example, the consequences of using illegal substances and the impact of knife crime.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, staff do not plan, or implement, the key-stage-3 curriculum carefully enough. They do not always pay close enough attention to pupils' specific learning needs. A minority of pupils in key stage 3 produce work that is of a poor quality or is left unfinished. These pupils cannot recall important subject content and have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders must ensure that the key-stage-3 curriculum is implemented consistently well in all subjects and meets the needs of pupils. Leaders should make sure that teachers check that key-stage-3 pupils have secure knowledge before moving on.
- A small number of pupils sometimes show a lack of respect to others and become dysregulated. Some staff do not always manage these incidents of poor behaviour in the same way. This poor behaviour occasionally disrupts others' learning and their social times. Leaders must ensure that everyone has the same high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct. They must check that all staff implement the school's behaviour policy consistently. Leaders must provide pupils who struggle to self-regulate with the support they need to behave well at all times.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	137912
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10211915
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	1427
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	221
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	William Thallon
Principal	Nicholas Salisbury and Alastair Mitchell (co-principals)
Website	http://www.hattonacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 to 9 January 2015

Information about this school

- The two co-principals took up their roles temporarily in July 2019. Their positions were made permanent in November 2020.
- The chief executive officer of the trust was appointed to the role permanently in October 2019. The chair of the board of trustees has also been appointed since the school's previous inspection.
- The number of pupils on the school's roll has increased significantly since the school's previous inspection, including the number of students in the sixth form.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options available to them, including information 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began, Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the co-principals, senior school leaders and other school leaders, including the coordinator of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The lead inspector met with a group of trustees, including the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive office of the trust.
- Inspectors did deep dives in five subjects: English, mathematics, geography, design and technology, and physical education and sport. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, and considered pupils' and sixth-form students' work. They spoke with pupils, sixth-form students and teachers. They heard pupils read. On the second day of the inspection, inspectors examined the curriculum in a wider range of subjects, reviewed a sample of workbooks from history, science and Spanish and from pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from a range of different year groups, including sixth-form students and pupils with SEND. They spoke with pupils informally and observed the behaviour of pupils during social times.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of one of the alternative providers used by the school on the telephone.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks, holding discussions with the designated safeguarding leader, staff and pupils, and reviewing documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took note of the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View and Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. They also considered responses to the school's own surveys for parents and for pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan. They considered information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and suspensions, and the wider curriculum.

Inspection team

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