

# Sheffield Community Academy

## Inspection report

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|                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 135769            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Walsall           |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 364400            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 15 – 16 June 2011 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Michael Smith HMI |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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|--|--|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Academy                                    |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                                  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11 - 18                                    |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                      |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form         | Mixed                                      |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 1342                                       |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 187  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                         |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Joyce Hodgetts                             |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Bernard Dickenson                          |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | N/A  |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Broad Way<br>Pelsall<br>Walsall<br>WS4 1BW |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01922 685777                               |
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They visited 61 lessons and observed students in the Success Centre. They held meetings with staff, students, and members of the governing body. They observed the academy's work, interrogated the academy's assessment records and looked at the minutes of the meetings of the governing body, the minutes of meetings with the School Improvement Partner, faculty evaluations and academy action plans and evaluations. They also scrutinised 214 parent and carer questionnaires, 102 staff questionnaires and 122 student questionnaires

## Information about the school

The academy is a larger than an average secondary school with the numbers in the sixth form increasing. The academy has retained the admissions criteria of the predecessor school as part of the local authority's admission procedures, as well as allocating up to 24 places on the basis of students' aptitude in the academy's specialist area, sport. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is almost double the national average and the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. A very large majority of students are of White British heritage and the number who speak English as an additional language is very low. The academy works with the local authority and provides support for students from other schools as well as the academy within the Success Centre. These students are often ones who have been excluded from other schools or are in danger of being excluded. The academy has recently been recognised as one of the most improved schools or academies by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust.

At the time of the inspection Year 11 and 13 students were on study leave and the academy had started next year's timetable for the remainder of the students.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                               | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Achievement</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Teaching</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Leadership and management</b>                           | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Behaviour and safety</b>                                | <b>1</b> |
| Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being? | Yes      |
| Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?     | Yes      |
| Does the school provide value for money?                   | Yes      |

## Key findings

- The academy is highly effective in raising the aspirations of students so that they are very well prepared for future education, training or the world of work. The very strong ambition of its leaders is shared so that all staff who responded to the survey said they were proud to be a member of the academy and they knew what it was trying to achieve.
- Increasing numbers of students are carrying on their education by progressing into higher education, many being the first in their families to do so.
- Leaders have been highly effective in developing an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation between students so that behaviour is excellent.
- All students who answered the questionnaires say they feel very safe in the academy and this was supported by responses from parents and carers, with virtually all confirming that their child felt very safe. As one response to the questionnaires said, reflecting comments in others, 'it all helps when your child looks forward to school.....a school that is there for the children.'
- Leaders, at all levels, have been successful in improving the quality of teaching. In the large majority of lessons teaching is good. The proportion of outstanding teaching has increased considerably just as the satisfactory teaching has reduced to a small minority of lessons. Lessons typically consider how well students learn and often concentrate on developing students' understanding of the topic alongside content. Staff use modern technologies well to support their teaching but students have fewer opportunities to use these in lessons.
- Achievement has risen rapidly so that results at the end of Key Stage 4 are often well above average, particularly in vocational courses, and results in mathematics and English are now broadly average. Students who are likely to have been excluded work well within the Success Centre and achieve appropriate qualifications to allow them to carry on in education or gain employment or a training place.

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- Provision for students in the sixth form and results in A level examinations have improved significantly. However at times students' targets are not sufficiently challenging and occasionally lessons aim at the middle-ability students within the group and do not always stretch the most able.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise achievement in the sixth form by ensuring:
  - students' targets are realistic and challenging
  - lessons consistently challenge students of all abilities within each group, particularly the most able.

## Main report

Sheffield provides excellent opportunities for students to develop into mature young adults. The drive and ambition from leaders to ensure that all students achieve is central to the reason the academy is judged outstanding. Leaders, very well supported by the governing body, are not complacent and they realise all is not yet perfect. They strive to carry on improving. There is an accurate appraisal of how well it is achieving and a well-formulated improvement plan to ensure it meets these high expectations. These, along with the excellent success to date, demonstrate an outstanding capacity to improve. The governing body, along with the sponsors provide additional support for the academy, often bringing in outside professionals to deliver professional development in order to improve further the quality of teaching and learning.

The academy community is extremely harmonious and students were keen to let inspectors know how they feel safe and that behaviour is very good at all times. Effective information on behaviour helps heads of colleges to pick up problems very early and non-teaching pastoral staff provide highly effective support to pre-empt any problems before they arise. Students have a very clear awareness of what constitutes different types of bullying and were surprised when asked if there was much bullying in the academy. They commented that there were very occasional incidents but these were dealt with very well. One student said, 'we are taught what the consequences of bullying are on the individual and it makes you very aware of why it is wrong.' Students are very sociable and they are very aware of the complex multicultural environment in which they are growing up. They have a very high understanding of morality. The academy is highly inclusive and works well to overcome the barriers and ensure equality of opportunity, so that all students can meet its ambition to 'Lay the foundations to bright young futures.'

The highly effective principal, very well supported by the senior leadership team, have empowered staff so that they are all committed to continually improving the quality of teaching and increasing the rate of learning. Attainment has risen sharply to be generally above average with high standards in vocational courses. The academy's records show that results in mathematics and English are due to rise

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again this year and will be close to average. Justifying the recent award as one of the most improved academies or schools since it opened as an academy. Targets are used effectively to challenge students although in the sixth form these targets are not always sufficiently challenging.

During the inspection, students were observed making good and often outstanding progress in lessons. In many lessons, students were fully engaged and responded well to being given opportunities to work in groups. Behaviour is excellent with students engaged and enthusiastic in lessons wanting to achieve. Records, comments from students and responses to the questionnaires from students, parents and carers also show that similar standards of behaviour are the norm. Students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also learn and progress well. The group whose circumstances make them more vulnerable and who attend the Success Centre work very well. They all achieve good examination results, albeit in a smaller number of subjects, which are also enhanced by very good experiences of the work place or additional qualifications through college. This has meant that they leave the academy and carry on with education, employment or training. This shows how well the academy meets the needs of all students and works very well to ensure they can, and do, achieve to overcome disadvantages.

In the sixth form, strong leadership has brought about significant improvements to the provision and results are starting to rise, at similar brisk pace to those in Key Stage 4. They are broadly average. Recent module results are very encouraging and show much improved progress. The proportion of students who carry on into Year 13 from Year 12 has increased.

Teaching has improved strongly and is good, with lessons which are outstanding. Students explained that the lessons observed were typical of those which they generally get. Relationships between adults and students or students and students are extremely productive. In the large majority of lessons where teaching is good or better, teachers are very effective at using assessment information to pitch work at the correct level for nearly all students. Even where they are in sets based on ability, although this is not always the case in some sixth form lessons.

Progress is good and improving strongly because of the good quality learning in lessons. This is characterised by high levels of student engagement in the interesting and stimulating activities on offer. These ensure that there is a balance in the type of activity students engage in. They demonstrate well developed independence and cooperation skills. For example, in an outstanding lesson students worked extremely effectively in groups improving their literacy skills by perfecting similes and metaphors. They then made very pertinent observations about the quality of each others work making very helpful suggestions about how improvements could be made so that they could reach their personal targets.

Nearly all students are aware of the targets and levels they are aiming for. Students assert that marking is very helpful in identifying the next steps they need to take in their learning. Peer and self assessment procedures are used well to ensure students

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take responsibility for their own learning.

Specialist reading recovery for Year 7 students and sport in literacy initiatives have been very effective at ensuring that lower attaining students have the necessary skills to succeed in other subjects. Students in need of support are identified on entry to the academy. The impact of these initiatives has been impressive. Teachers in all subjects are being made aware of this and there are well developed plans to incorporate literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects. Key elements of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are also planned across all subjects and years. This is enhanced by all students completing at least a short course GCSE in religious education.

New technologies are used effectively by teachers to enhance teaching and learning. The '3D rooms' add an exciting dimension to learning. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson where students were being prepared to read war poetry with understanding they were developing an empathy for the horrors of war and what it meant to be a soldier in the trenches by taking a three -dimensional tour.

Student responses say they all feel very safe and the academy is extremely harmonious. The academy complies with current requirements regarding safeguarding. Adults care for them very much and they respond to this by working well. Many students see the benefit in gaining a good education and this is raising their aspirations and widening their horizons.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sheffield Community Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 214 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1342 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |   | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | % | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 52             | 24 | 143   | 67 | 17       | 8 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 71             | 33 | 140   | 65 | 2        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child’s progress   | 83             | 39 | 123   | 57 | 5        | 2 | 1                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 83             | 39 | 122   | 57 | 6        | 3 | 0                 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 69             | 32 | 140   | 65 | 3        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child’s learning  | 52             | 24 | 150   | 70 | 9        | 4 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 31             | 14 | 162   | 76 | 19       | 9 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 73             | 34 | 134   | 63 | 3        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child’s particular needs  | 57             | 27 | 149   | 70 | 3        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 65             | 30 | 129   | 61 | 12       | 6 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 44             | 21 | 150   | 70 | 14       | 7 | 1                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 68             | 32 | 141   | 66 | 3        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school   | 111            | 52 | 100   | 47 | 2        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

| Grade   | Judgement    | Description  |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding  | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.  |
| Grade 2 | Good         | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.  |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.  |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate   | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

### Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school       | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) |      |              |            |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
|                      | Outstanding   | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools      | 46  | 48   | 6            | 0          |
| Primary schools      | 6   | 47   | 40           | 7          |
| Secondary schools    | 12  | 39   | 38           | 11         |
| Sixth forms          | 13  | 42   | 41           | 3          |
| Special schools      | 28  | 49   | 19           | 4          |
| Pupil referral units | 14  | 45   | 31           | 10         |
| All schools          | 10  | 46   | 37           | 7          |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Achievement:               | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.  |
| Attainment:                | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.   |
| Capacity to improve:       | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.   |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.   |
| Learning:                  | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.   |
| Overall effectiveness:     | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The achievement of all pupils.</li> <li>■ Behaviour and safety.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of leadership and management.</li> </ul> <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.</li> </ul> |
| Progress:                  | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.  |

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**

17 June 2011

Dear Students



### **Inspection of Sheffield Community Academy, Walsall, WS4 1BW**

When I visited your academy recently with my colleagues, we met some of you at lunchtime and talked to others during lessons and at break. Thank you very much for your help and cooperation. We were impressed with your excellent behaviour, manners, the how well you contribute to the life of the academy and local community. You told us that you greatly enjoy being at the academy and this is one reason, of many, that we judge your academy to be outstanding. Thank you also for answering our many questions so we could get a better understanding of what it is typically like in the academy. Your responses to staff and your keenness to do well are key elements as to why you make good and strongly improving progress. Well done!

Results in your GCSE examinations, have risen sharply and you do particularly well in vocational subjects. We observed over 61 lessons and judged that teaching is good overall with some outstanding lessons. Lessons were best when you had plenty of opportunities to work independently. We also liked the '3D' room. There are excellent relationships with staff, and most of your lessons are challenging and interesting with a rich variety of activities. We have asked the academy to make sure that achievement in the sixth form continues to improve as rapidly as it has done in Key Stage 4. We have recommended that sixth form students have more challenging targets and that lessons always make sure that the brightest students are challenged.

Staff care for you exceptionally well to prepare you for your next phase of education or the world of work. We were very impressed on how well those of you in the Success Centre worked and with one of you who was continuing to come into the new academy building site to work even after you had officially left. You have a very good understanding of your local community. Your principal and other senior leaders have very clearly identified what needs to be done and they are very determined to carry on improving the academy. They are supported by some excellent subject and pastoral leaders, teachers and other staff.

We wish you well at this outstanding academy of which you are justifiably proud.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Smith  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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