

# Tuxford Academy

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	137319
<b>Local authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	395563
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Paul Brooker HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<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>	1490
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	268
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Rolph
<b>Headteacher</b>	Geoff Lloyd (Principal) and Chris Pickering (Executive Principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 May 2009
<b>School address</b>	Marnham Road Tuxford NG22 0JH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01777 870001
<b>Fax number</b>	01777 872155
<b>Email address</b>	office@tuxford-comp.notts.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	9–10 May 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	395563



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Paul Brooker	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Turner	Additional Inspector
Paul Delbridge-Smith	Additional Inspector
Sa'ad Khaldi	Additional Inspector
Sherry Gladwin	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. In total, the inspection team made 56 lesson observations of 56 different teachers, some which were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including students' work, the academy's self-evaluation and student tracking data, and evaluated the arrangements made for safeguarding. Meetings were held with nominated staff, groups of students and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors took account of the very small number of returns available from the online questionnaire (Parent View) and, in addition, analysed inspection questionnaire responses from 266 parents and carers, 126 students and 108 staff.

## Information about the school

Tuxford School converted to become an academy in September 2011. In most respects, the change in status from maintained school to academy has not altered Tuxford's character: it has continued to grow, and is much larger than the average secondary school; it has national support school status; and a specialism in technology. In April 2012, it was designated as a Teaching School. The academy is part of the Diverse Academies Learning Partnership with two other secondary academies, under the leadership of the Executive Principal.

The vast majority of students are of White British heritage. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average, and the proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is broadly average. Attainment meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected by the government.

**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 of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- Tuxford Academy is outstanding. The sixth form is good. Students thrive academically and develop the essential personal qualities and attitudes that prepare them very well for adult life. The academy's very high expectations and exceptional support and guidance ensure that students, including those facing barriers to engagement and achievement, are given every opportunity to succeed. The overwhelmingly positive responses from students, staff, parents and carers affirm the academy's outstanding effectiveness.
- Achievement is outstanding. The academy achieves results at Key Stage 4 that are much higher than average. Standards and achievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are particularly high. All groups of students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs, achieve well.
- Teaching is good. Much is outstanding, but inspection observations could not substantiate the academy's assertion that it is of a consistently high quality. The teaching in a small but significant proportion of lessons seen during the inspection was no better than satisfactory because of shortcomings in aspects of planning or the use of assessment.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Students are courteous and considerate. They conduct themselves with commendable maturity in lessons and around the academy. Their positive attitudes are a key factor in their progress and achievement.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The academy has sustained its high achievement with efficient monitoring, effective performance management of teaching and rigorous self-evaluation. The continuous cycle of review and improvement planning enhances the excellent curriculum and raises standards unrelentingly.

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

- In the small minority of lessons where teaching is less than outstanding, sharpen teachers' use and impact of assessment to:
  - devise suitably challenging tasks and learning outcomes for different groups in each lesson
  - check students' understanding and effectively guide their next steps, both in lessons and through marking.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

High standards and outstanding achievement are firmly rooted in the strong performance of the core subjects at Key Stage 4. Students' attainment on entry in Year 7 is generally above average, but rates of progress for all groups of students are better than those seen nationally in English and mathematics. Standards have risen year-on-year since the last inspection, and the academy's robust tracking data indicates that results are set to rise further in 2012. The accelerated gains made by students with lower starting points, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, mean that gaps in their performance are narrowed. Systematic use of assessment underpins students' learning and progress. Students are aware of their targets and how they can improve, and teachers are quick to identify any who are falling behind. The academy implements excellent procedures to support and guide individual students, and systematic intervention when particular groups need additional support. Students' numeracy and literacy are securely developed in mathematics and English lessons, and their speaking, reading and writing skills are very well supported across the curriculum, for example in history lessons in Key Stage 3.

Evidence from lesson observations confirms the views of parents and carers that, over time, students make rapid and sustained progress. They learn exceptionally well primarily because teaching is well organised and often inspiring, but also because they respond so positively to the academy's high expectations. Students know what they should achieve in each lesson because learning objectives are routinely shared, and work is carefully structured and well pitched. Learning and progress are most rapid when teachers set ambitious outcomes and present tasks that encourage independent learning and self-review. Year 8 students in a physical education lesson, for example, skilfully evaluated key aspects of their gymnastics to refine each group's performance, and Year 10 students used mind-mapping to review their impressive computer-aided designs in a graphical design lesson.

The quality of learning in the sixth-form lessons is a notable strength. Lessons are well-structured and challenging and enable most sixth-form students to make good progress and meet or exceed their individual targets.

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## Quality of teaching

Parents and carers acknowledge the high quality of much of the teaching, and also point to some weaker aspects, such as marking in specific lessons. The academy enjoys an excellent climate for learning and much of the teaching is outstanding. Positive relationships between adults and students, and between students themselves, ensure that lesson time is very well used. In general, teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to present a suitable level of challenge and to clearly explain and model work for students. Teachers direct learning confidently and make good use of resources, including information and communication technology, to structure their lessons with clear objectives. Nonetheless, inspectors found quite wide variation in the quality and pace of learning. In many lessons, charismatic teachers inject pace and enthuse all students in the group by making learning lively and fun. However, the best teaching does more than 'put on a good show'. In these lessons teachers consider carefully what students will do and how different groups will learn.

Outstanding teaching maximises the use of assessment, both in lessons and through marking, to review students' understanding and effectively steer their progress. The best teachers seamlessly incorporate mini-plenary sessions, timing their interjections skilfully, to develop students' self-review skills and assess their gains. In a Year 11 catering and hospitality lesson, this cleverly promoted an open dialogue about learning and re-focused the students' work to accelerate their progress. Some marking, for example in English, also models best practice by identifying what students have done particularly well and pinpointing what needs improving next time. Importantly, teachers follow this up and praise students who make necessary improvement. However, this attention to detail is inconsistent. Inspectors found some lessons where books were rarely marked or where perfunctory comments had little impact on students' learning and progress. Despite this variability, however, most students are remarkably independent, and show resilience by maintaining their efforts and taking pride in their work. Their conscientious approach to homework, for example, makes a strong contribution to learning.

Although most lessons are challenging and well-paced, inspectors also found some unambitious planning, particularly but not exclusively in Key Stage 3. In a few lessons teachers did not use their detailed assessment information to present suitable challenge to all groups, although the individual requirements of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs were consistently well supported.

Most sixth-form lessons observed were good or outstanding because teachers nurture academic curiosity and promote excellence; students readily engage in whole-class discussions on controversial and sensitive issues, and relish the chance to demonstrate their grasp of intellectual terminology and newly acquired concepts.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

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Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour and safety. Students' positive commitment and excellent behaviour make a strong contribution to learning and progress. In lessons, they settle quickly, are keen to do well and they work with sustained concentration. They collaborate when working in pairs and groups and readily take responsibility for their own learning. The academy's emphasis on independent responsibility encourages students to develop as confident and articulate young adults.

Students are polite and considerate. They are punctual to school and to lessons and their attendance is above average. Students are aware of different types of bullying, but say that it is very rare. They say that they have confidence that the academy will deal effectively with any concerns that arise, and that they feel safe.

### **Leadership and management**

The academy has an impressive track record of success over a sustained period of time, but does not rest on its laurels. Leaders and managers, including the governing body, are ambitious for their own academy and lead by example. Their uncompromising pursuit of excellence is securely founded on rigorous self-review and a determination to achieve equality of opportunity and the best possible outcomes for every student. Moreover, the academy is outward-looking in seeking improvement and explores any opportunity to strengthen provision and drive up standards by working closely in strategic partnership with local primary and secondary schools. The academy's well-structured and flexible curriculum is central to securing students' positive engagement and achievement. It provides suitable pathways, extensive enrichment opportunities and memorable experiences. The academy promotes exceptionally well the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by encouraging them to be reflective and to value one another's qualities and differences.

The academy's strong capacity to improve is rooted in its unequivocal expectations and the continuous drive to improve teaching. Senior and middle leaders focus relentlessly on strengthening the quality of learning with a multi-tiered system of support for staff, underpinned by a well-structured programme of professional training and development in which staff at all levels are encouraged to take a lead.

The academy has highly sophisticated strategies for communicating and engaging with parents and carers, including those who might traditionally find working with the academy difficult. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire said that they would recommend the academy. Their unusually detailed responses reflect how well-informed they are. The academy's robust arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.

## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



11 May 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Tuxford Academy, Nottinghamshire, NG22 0JH**

Thank you for making such a positive contribution to our recent inspection. We were struck by your warm welcome and the very mature way that you conduct yourselves around the academy and in lessons. Your carefully articulated views, alongside the survey responses from your parents and carers, confirmed our first-hand observations and the academy's own evaluation. Tuxford Academy has many strengths and is outstanding in its overall effectiveness. We were most impressed by:

- the outstanding progress that you make, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science
- your exemplary behaviour and positive attitudes to learning
- the many excellent lessons that we observed.

The academy maintains very high expectations, but uses its self-evaluation to constantly monitor aspects that can be improved. Senior leaders know its strengths and priorities for improvement. Although teaching is good, and much is outstanding, the inspection team felt that elements of teaching should be strengthened. A few lessons do not provide sufficient challenge, and marking does not always steer your progress and drive improvement. We have therefore asked the academy to work on these specific aspects of teaching to ensure that it is all of a consistently high standard.

Your positive attitudes and hard work underpin your own progress and achievement, but also contribute strongly to the academy's overall effectiveness. We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Brooker  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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