

Academy 360

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135622
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	385879
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2012
Lead inspector	Paul Hancock HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	958
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Walls
Headteacher	Charlotte Blencowe
Date of previous school inspection	11 April 2011
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Introduction

Inspection team

Paul Hancock
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Her Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Seconded Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector
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This inspection was carried out with two days' notice by four inspectors who observed 40 teachers and teaching assistants teaching 42 lessons. Two were joint observations with the Principal and vice-principal. The inspectors discussed the work of the academy with students and staff. Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the academy self-evaluation and improvement plan, the safeguarding and equality policies, and minutes of the governing body meetings. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and 53 parental and carers' questionnaires were analysed and others completed by students and staff.

Information about the school

The academy opened in September 2008 in a new building and is sponsored by Sunderland City Council and 'Gentoo', a social housing group that is leading the regeneration of the area surrounding the academy. It was one of the first academies to cater for students from the age of four to 16 and the specialism is business and enterprise. The number of students is similar when compared with average primary and secondary schools. Nearly all students are White British. A small number of students come from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is broadly average. A well above average proportion of students in the main school are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The academy has met the current floor standards, which the government sets for the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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

Overall Effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- Academy 360 is a satisfactory academy which is continuing to improve. New initiatives and systems are firmly established and making a positive impact on attainment, achievement and the quality of teaching. It is not a good academy yet because more time is required to ensure all students make the progress they should as a result of all the teaching being at least good or better.

- In accordance with section 13 (5) of the education act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the academy no longer requires significant improvement. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

- Achievement is satisfactory and all groups of students make satisfactory progress including disabled students and those with special educational needs. Forty six per cent of Year 11 students are on track to gain five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics from low starting points when they joined the academy. Achievement in the primary years is satisfactory and standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 are close to average in reading, writing and mathematics from low starting points. Children currently in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making outstanding progress, which is a significant recent improvement.

- Teaching is satisfactory and the proportion of good or better teaching is increasing. The academy knows what the next steps are to make sure the match between tasks and lesson planning fully challenge and meet the students' different learning needs. Assessment information is used effectively when planning lessons. The best marking is detailed and students are clear about how well they are doing. There are examples of marking and feedback which students find difficult to understand, for example, because the language used is too complex. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are satisfactory and used effectively to support teachers in developing their practice.

- Behaviour is satisfactory in lessons and around the academy. Students feel safe and have positive attitudes when the teaching is good. Attendance has improved and the

academy knows there is more to be done to meet the national average. Parents and carers value the work of the academy and links with partners are strong. Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory and senior leaders are making sure the academy continues to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teaching is good or better by:
 - sharing best practice, for example, in behaviour management and engaging students in their own learning
 - ensuring marking and feedback of the highest quality is consistently provided to students and used to set challenging learning targets.
- Raise attainment and achievement by:
 - improving the use of curriculum time at Key Stages 3 and 4
 - making sure students' progress and achievement is always good
 - ensuring all students are fully challenged, and given a greater responsibility for their own learning
 - making sure the match between tasks and lesson planning fully meets the students' different learning needs.
- Continue to raise attendance.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children start at the academy with knowledge and skills that are well below average. All groups of students, including disabled students, those with special educational needs and the well above average proportion known to be eligible for free school meals make satisfactory progress. Attainment in English and mathematics is close to average at Year 6 and Year 11 for the cohorts who started in 2008 with well below average attainment on entry. The achievement and progress of the current children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and they are expected to start in Year 1 in September with attainment which is average and above. Current attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Inspection evidence from listening to pupils read shows they have the decoding skills to apply letters and sounds but are reluctant to use them unless prompted to do so. The academy is taking effective action to meet targets in the specialism.

Achievement and attainment have significantly improved when students leave the academy in Year 11. The number gaining 5 GCSE A*- C, including English and mathematics has risen from 17% in 2009 to 35% in 2011 and on track to gain 46% in 2012. Seventy three per cent of students gained five or more GCSE Grades A* - C in 2011 and the academy predicts 86% are expected to achieve the same this year. Virtually all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire say they are happy with the progress their children make in the school. Students have positive attitudes to learning when tasks are challenging and meet their needs. They enjoy lessons which engage them productively but quickly lose interest when the work is mundane and they are expected to listen for long periods of time.

Progress is slower where students in Key Stages 3 and 4 have few opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning or work independently on their own programmes of study.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving, including the teaching of disabled students and those with special educational needs. Good or better teaching was seen and the best is characterised by a strong focus on independent learning delivered at a fast pace that engages the students quickly. The most recent assessment information is taken into account and activities are very effectively matched to students' needs. For example in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teaching created individual levels of challenge allowing pupils to progress from a personalised starting point and the teacher intervened to add further challenge when required. Where the quality of teaching is not as high, the opportunities for students to be directly involved in their own learning are limited and the needs of different abilities are insufficiently taken into account.

Assessment information is used effectively to ensure students make satisfactory progress. Marking and assessment practice is more effectively delivered as a result of new initiatives and systems being introduced. There is still some way to go before it is consistently good in all year groups and subjects. Evidence from listening to pupils and students read in Key Stages 1 and 3 confirms that the teaching of reading is satisfactory. All parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt their child was well taught at the school. Teaching makes a satisfactory impact on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, by providing opportunities for students to learn about life in other cultures. Teachers' subject knowledge is not always effectively used in Key Stages 3 and 4 because of the way in which the curriculum is organised. The academy is taking the right action to make improvements.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

A new behaviour management policy introduced in the last year has made a significant impact and students' behaviour is satisfactory in lessons and around the academy building. Students are aware of what is expected of them and the consequences if they do not behave appropriately. Students say that they feel safe and incidents of all types of bullying are dealt with effectively. A number of parents, carers, pupils and students who responded to the questionnaire felt the school did not deal with bullying well. Their concerns were thoroughly investigated and no evidence was found to indicate that this was the case.

Attendance has significantly improved but remains just below the national average because it falls in Key Stage 4. The academy knows making improvements are a high priority and is taking effective action to further raise attendance to meet the national average. Procedures are more robust and students' punctuality has improved. The number of persistent absentees and exclusions has been considerably reduced in the last year. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt the school ensured their child was well looked after.

Leadership and management

The academy has sufficient capacity to make improvements and leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The capacity to drive further improvement is confirmed through significant gains in achievement, teaching, behaviour and attendance. The strategic vision of the governing body and senior leaders to make the academy at least good is being realised and aspirations are high. Self-evaluation is accurate and the right action is taken to make improvements. The governing body is effective in challenging the senior leaders about students' results and the quality of teaching and provides strong support to drive improvement. The performance management of teachers is improving the quality of teaching. Safeguarding procedures are routinely monitored and meet requirements.

Equality of opportunity is effectively promoted and all forms of discrimination are tackled. The academy provides a secure platform for the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The satisfactory curriculum is enriched with activities which provide opportunities for cultural, musical, and sporting events. The academy is making improvements to the curriculum in Years 7 to 11, for example, to revise the two hour lessons in English and mathematics. The academy knows the engagement of parents and carers is a priority and is taking action, for example, through feedback from questionnaires. Virtually all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire praised the work of the academy which takes their views into account.

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).

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.



20 June 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Academy 360, Sunderland, SR4 9BA

Thank you for all your help when I inspected the academy with my colleagues. Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say inspectors took all their views into account. I thought you might like to know what we found about your academy.

- Academy 360 is a satisfactory and improving academy which no longer requires a 'notice to improve'.
- Your achievement is satisfactory and you are making reasonable progress.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving.
- Your behaviour is satisfactory, and you feel safe and are cared for well.
- The governing body and senior leaders are making the right improvements to help you achieve more highly.

To help your leaders do this, I have asked them to:

- ensure all teaching is good or better
- continue to raise you attainment and achievement
- raise your attendance, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

I know the staff would appreciate your help and I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector

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