

Cedars Academy

Ivy Lane, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE9 6QD

Inspection dates 12-13 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Students achieve well across all key stages and in a wide range of subjects including reading, writing, communication and mathematics.
- Leaders, managers and governors ensure that regular staff training meets the needs of all learners so that students learn effectively.
- Leaders and managers work together as a team and are having a positive impact on teaching and achievement. This is an improving school which is well placed to improve further.
- Students behaviour is good. They feel safe and are thoughtful and considerate to each other and to staff.
- The vast majority of parents are very supportive of staff and are happy with the provision and outcomes for their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Although reading, writing, communication and mathematics are promoted well individually; cross-curricular links are not always as well developed.
- The teaching strategies and very occasionally the pace of learning do not always extend more-able students.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 12 lessons, seeing 12 different teachers.
- They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and pupils.
- They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including that relating to safeguarding, assessment and achievement.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Parent View and a recent parental survey completed by the school.

Inspection team

Michele Crichton Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Pauline Pitman

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Currently, 84 students attend the Cedars Academy which caters for an age range of 5–16 years.
- Currently, there are no children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the majority of students are at Key Stage 3 and above.
- All students have (or are being assessed for) a statement of special educational needs, identifying the severity and complexity of their difficulties.
- Students exhibit a wide range of special educational needs and/or disability.
- The main groups are those with communication, emotional, physical or cognitive difficulties.
- A minority but increasing number of students are on the autism spectrum.
- A few students have deteriorating conditions, some of which are life-limiting.
- Nearly all students are White British.
- Boys outnumber girls by approximately two to one.
- There are very few students at the school who are in the care of the local authority.
- Almost a quarter of students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium which is above the national average.
- In January 2010, the Cedars became a trust school and on 1 September 2012 it converted to academy status.
- There are close partnership links with Joseph Swan Academy where provision is made for the Cedars' post-16 students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of achievement by ensuring that reading, writing, communication and mathematics are promoted consistently well by all teachers across all subject areas.
- Ensure more-able students are consistently challenged to ensure that they always make as much progress as possible.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Taking into account their different starting points, most students, including those for whom the pupil premium provides support, make good progress and achieve well over time across all areas of their learning and different key stages. However, more-able students are not consistently challenged to ensure they always make as much progress as possible.
- Due to the very wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities within the school, flexible provision enables students to benefit from individual programmes of learning. Some higher-attaining students achieved well this year to gain high GCSE grades in subjects such as English, mathematics and physical education. Other students have success in achieving at Entry Level Functional Skills or the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
- Across the school opportunities to develop reading, writing, communication and mathematics are promoted well enabling most students to make good progress. However, students do not always have enough opportunity to apply them in some other subjects.
- Reading is developed systematically across all key stages and progress in reading is good. Students comment that they enjoy reading and know they are improving. Communication is a focus for all students and this is promoted at every opportunity in discussions with staff,

formal lessons or more social situations with friends at lunchtime.

- Good and often outstanding progress is made in pupils' personal development, including their confidence and sense of self-worth. For some this contrasts markedly with their previous experience of school. This is achieved by a consistent supportive attitude from staff and the impressive way the academy uses sport to develop teamwork, communication, social skills and self-esteem within students.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Good quality teaching contributes effectively to learning. Probing questions result in students' good understanding of the topic being studied, focuses attention and stimulates thinking. In the best lessons, practical and theoretical applications are discussed to ensure students respond well in real-life situations as well as to examination questions. Here, staff also demonstrate both high levels of subject knowledge and knowledge of the development of students with specific physical and learning needs.
- Staff regularly remind students about the learning objectives of each lesson and provide links to students' previous knowledge to that currently being acquired. Additionally, a good learning pace and well targeted support from additional adults in the room result in good progress and achievement for most students.
- Engagement and interest wanders, especially for some higher-ability students, when work is insufficiently challenging and there is limited availability for extension work. On these occasions, it hampers the accelerated progress that these students could make.
- Teaching assistants have a positive impact on learning because they are deployed effectively and have a high level of skill and expertise. As a result, they support learning well, diffuse potential behavioural situations and sustain good personal relationships with students.
- Engagement and interest wanders, especially for some higher-ability students, when work is insufficiently challenging and there is limited availability for extension work. On these occasions, it hampers the accelerated progress that these students could make.
- Additionally, although reading, writing, communication and mathematics are promoted well individually within the school, there are occasions when opportunities to extend literacy, communication and numeracy skills in cross-curricular lessons are not exploited.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Students are polite, courteous to staff and visitors and openly helpful to each other throughout the academy. They develop their social skills well because they are encouraged to work together. For example, in an outstanding physical education session lesson students of very different physical abilities cooperated exceptionally well together thus ensuring the participation of all, excellent skill development and a great deal of fun.
- Students have a secure knowledge of how to keep themselves safe in a range of different situations. For example, when using mobile phones, computers or using sporting equipment. They say that behaviour is good the majority of the time but that sometimes some students need extra help from staff to cope with life, learning, independence or social situations.
- A survey completed by parents in the summer term 2012, demonstrates the high regard that the vast majority of parents have for staff and appreciate the provision made for their children. Parents rate highly the safe environment in which children are cared for, that children make appropriate progress and that they like coming to school. At the time of the inspection there were 11 parents that registered their opinions on Parent View who arrive at similar conclusions.
- Students' attitudes to learning are predominantly positive. However, there are occasions when this lapses because work in lessons is insufficiently challenging, especially for more-able students. In these instances, learning time is lost and attention and behaviour can

wane.

- Although figures are influenced by the small number of pupils who have acute medical conditions, for the vast majority of students, attendance is in line with national mainstream secondary schools. Student exclusions are rare.

The leadership and management

are good

- There is a clear sense of purpose and drive by effective senior leaders and managers which ensure students make good progress and teaching is strong. Over recent years, an increase in the number of students on the autism spectrum and those with complex emotional issues has extended the range of special educational needs within the academy. As a response, the continuous professional development of staff is carefully evaluated by the senior leadership team to match to this changing profile of need. This identifies the academy's effectiveness in promoting equal opportunities for all.
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' support for this good school.
- The curriculum is planned thoroughly to meet students' individual needs. Throughout the school there is an imaginative range of age-appropriate activities and resources to make learning interesting and relevant.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects are promoted well throughout the school. This is demonstrated in students' respect for individual differences and in the persistence of students to be the best they can be, for example in their chosen sport or academic pursuit. Learning and self-esteem are enhanced through different experiences, including numerous residentials, visits to museums, art galleries, parks and sporting activities.
- Very good partnerships with a range of agencies promote good achievement. This is exemplified in the personalised programmes of learning for post-16 Cedars' students arranged in partnership with Joseph Swan Academy. Courses and activities are carefully considered to match the profile of learning need of each student to ensure they are successful at the next stage of learning.
- Safeguarding procedures are of robust quality and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - provides good support for the academy
 - ensures governors have clear knowledge and understanding of the current strengths, weaknesses and areas for development within the school
 - challenges senior leaders to promote the achievements of all students
 - is rigorous in its approach to decision-making such as consideration of the move from trust to academy status.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138652
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	408779

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Special
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Kidwell
Headteacher	Jane Fraser
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2010
Telephone number	0191 433 4046
Fax number	0191 482 0926
Email address	cedarschool@gateshead.gov.uk

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