

The Nuneaton Academy

Radnor Drive, Nuneaton, CV10 7PD

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students' progress in English and mathematics is not yet good enough. However, the rate at which they make progress is increasing.
- Boys do not do as well as girls. The academy is not closing the gap in progress quickly enough.
- Teaching is not consistently good across the academy. Too much inadequate teaching and not enough outstanding teaching means that not all students make good progress in all subjects.
- Not all teachers take available opportunities in lessons to help students develop their reading and writing skills.
- Teachers do not always set work at the right level for all students and sometimes do not involve them well enough in lessons.
- For some students, their poor reading and writing skills hold them back from making good progress. However, the academy has introduced a range of activities resulting in younger children making good progress in improving their reading and writing.
- The sixth form requires improvement in the same way as the rest of the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Students' behaviour is consistently good in lessons and at break times. They are keen learners and quickly develop skills to help them work on their own and in small groups.
- Students are polite and respectful of others. They are very well aware of cultural differences and their place in the world.
- Strong leadership and management have led to major improvements in students' achievement and behaviour, from a very low baseline.
- The academy has good capacity to make further improvements.
- The academy has quickly improved the quality of teaching, from a low starting point, due to the targets set for teachers and the extra training and support they receive.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 47 lessons, including several jointly with senior staff. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Inspectors met with leaders and managers, staff and groups of students. They also held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Midland Academies Trust.
- Inspectors looked at many examples of students' work, and planning and management documents.
- The inspection team took account of the views of the eight parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views of the 42 staff who returned questionnaires.

Inspection team

Derrick Baughan, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Clive Kempton	Her Majesty's Inspector
Robert Bourdon-Pierre	Additional Inspector
Shanaz Khan	Additional Inspector
Rosemary Myers	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Nuneaton Academy is a larger-than-average secondary school. It opened in September 2010, on the sites of the two predecessor schools.
- In September 2011, the academy moved to one site and opened a small sixth form. Additional buildings are currently under construction.
- It is part of the Midland Academies Trust, sponsored by North Warwickshire and Hinckley College. In January 2011, the trust appointed a new Principal.
- The vast majority of students are White British.
- Nearly 20% of students are known to be eligible for pupil premium (additional government funding).
- The proportion of students supported by school action is just above the national average.
- The proportions of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are at the national average.
- The academy meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by eradicating inadequate teaching and increasing the proportion of good or better teaching by:
 - ensuring that all lessons include work set at the right level for every student
 - making better use of questions and discussions to ensure all students are actively involved in lessons
 - ensuring that teachers regularly help students to practise reading and writing skills
 - providing more demanding work for students who work more quickly than others.
- Ensure that students' progress and the standards they reach match, or exceed, the national averages by the end of the academic year 2013/14.
- Reduce the gap, in progress made, between boys and girls by improving boys' reading and writing skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils enter the academy with standards that are much lower than average. The rate at which they make progress in English and mathematics is improving but the proportions of students who make expected and better than expected progress are still below national averages.
- Girls make much better progress than boys. The academy has taken a number of actions, such as single-sex lessons in mathematics, to close the gap. These are starting to have an impact. However, the gap is not closing quickly enough.
- Examination results have improved significantly from a very low level since the academy started, across a wide range of subjects. The proportion of students achieving five GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics has risen quickly although it is still below the national average. The proportion of students achieving a grade in GCSE mathematics is now at the national average.
- Students' achievement of work related qualifications is outstanding at 100%.
- Students' work and discussions with them during inspection show that they have a reasonable understanding of topics across a range of subjects. This is also true of the sixth form.
- Sixth form students' first year results were below national average. However, the number of students who stayed on for the second year is very high. Of those who did not stay, all went into either further education or employment. Current sixth form students are making satisfactory progress.
- Students' literacy skills are improving. The arrangements to support students on entry are having a clear effect on the younger children in the school. They are making good progress in improving their reading and writing skills.
- The academy makes good use of the pupil premium. Extra lessons, especially in English and mathematics, help the students in this group reach standards that compare favourably with national averages. Additional initiatives such as an 'accelerated reader scheme' are starting to help students make better progress.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs reach their targets. Their achievements are in line with national averages.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Students' progress and the standards they reach are improving because teaching is getting better. Inspectors saw some outstanding teaching. However, teaching is not yet good enough over time to help students make consistently good progress.
- Too much teaching does not involve students sufficiently well. Sometimes teachers talk for too long and students lose interest in the subject. In too many lessons, teachers do not give work that is demanding enough to students who work more quickly than others.
- In too many lessons teachers do not check students' progress sufficiently well. However, in the

better lessons, teachers check students' progress frequently and they make very good progress. Many teachers are good at using questions and discussions to check regularly students' progress but this good practice is not consistent enough across the school.

- Teachers often make good use of a rich variety of activities to help the students develop the ability to learn on their own and in small groups. In these lessons, teachers ensure that students are fully involved.
- Most teachers plan learning in lessons well. Planning shows a good understanding of the type of work required for all students. However, in too many lessons teachers do not put these plans fully into practice.
- Teachers mark students' work well. The feedback they get helps students know what their standard of work is and what they have to do to improve it.
- Although in some subjects, teachers give students opportunity to practise reading and writing skills, these opportunities are not sufficiently regular to strengthen students' literacy standards rapidly enough, particularly those of boys.
- Teaching and support in class are adapted well to meet the needs of students who are disabled or have special educational needs and those who are eligible for the pupil premium. As a result, these students make progress in line with national averages.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour around the school is good and they are well aware of the dangers of the building work going on. Staff, students and parents talk about the significant improvement in behaviour at the academy. Students enjoy learning and are polite and courteous to each other and visitors.
- The academy is good at developing students' positive attitudes to their studies. In one lesson, a few of the learners gave themselves an additional challenge. In another lesson, the teacher used small groups to good effect by nominating one student in each as the teacher for that activity, which the students clearly enjoyed.
- The academy has halved the number of students who are persistently absent, in just one year. Permanent exclusions are increasingly rare and the number of fixed-term exclusions is falling quickly.
- The academy has highly effective methods for dealing with students who do not attend. As a result, attendance is improving quickly and is just above national average.
- The academy has reduced the amount of bullying by introducing a good range of sanctions and support for students. Staff deal with any incidents that occur swiftly and effectively. Students talk about improvements in how bullying is dealt with and they feel safe at school. A Year 7 student said that after she had told her teacher about bullying it stopped straight away.
- The academy's arrangements for dealing with behaviour are much improved. Staff use them well to manage behaviour and minimise the impact of the very few disruptions that occur.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal's relentless drive for improvement coupled with her very high expectations have resulted in sustained improvement since she joined the academy. Staff share her clearly articulated vision and senior leaders work well with middle managers to put this vision into practice.
- Middle managers are confident and have faith in the leadership of the academy. They talk about being able to try innovative ideas to help individual students and whole classes. As a result, they are effective in contributing to improvement and are very enthusiastic about helping the academy to improve further.
- Teaching is improving quickly because of the very effective approach taken by the academy. Targets set for teachers are challenging and the support that they get to develop helps them do so quickly. The academy uses a highly effective six-week development plan and matches reward to performance very well.
- Arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching are robust. The academy has a good system for recording and analysing the results of lesson observations. Joint observations with inspectors show that senior staff are very good at identifying strengths and weaknesses in teaching.
- The academy offers its students a wide range of subjects to study. They have a good choice of academic and work related options at GCSE and A level, or equivalent. The academy also provides a good range of after-school activities, which most students attend.
- Resources are used well, including those which support students eligible for pupil premium funding.
- Assemblies and tutor-group lessons work well to help develop students' understanding of social, moral, spiritual and cultural matters. The academy has mixed-age tutor groups and the older students, particularly those in the sixth form, are good role models for the younger ones.
- The academy knows itself well. Self-evaluation is thorough and involves all staff. Senior leaders monitor action plans well to make improvements at a good pace. However, the self-evaluation document is overly descriptive.
- The academy has good arrangements for getting the views of students and their parents and carers. Parental surveys show that they are positive about the academy.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The sponsors and governors ensure that they meet their statutory responsibilities, including those for safeguarding. They make good use of the educational experience of the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Midland Academies Trust to oversee the work of the academy and rigorously monitor quality. Governors have a good knowledge of the academy through well-developed links between governors, and academy staff and students. Governors present a high level of challenge to senior staff by holding them to account for the delivery of ambitious targets, which have resulted in clear improvements. Governors and sponsors work well to develop the sharing of good practice across the four academies in the trust.

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	136158
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	399790

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1116
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Motley
Principal	Helen McEvoy
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Telephone number	024 7634 1134
Fax number	024 7637 5459
Email address	info@nuneatonacademy.co.uk

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