

Sheffield Springs Academy

Hurfield Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S12 2SF

Inspection dates

10–11 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Students do not make enough progress during Years 7 to 11 and their attainment is low. This is because too much teaching is inadequate and not enough is good or better.
- Examination results were low in 2011 and showed little improvement in 2012. Far fewer students than nationally make the expected progress in English and mathematics.
- Students' literacy, communication and numeracy skills are weak.
- Too often, teaching fails to interest students and the tasks set for them are too easy or too hard.
- A considerable minority of students do not behave well enough and they disrupt learning in lessons. Teachers are not always successful at tackling this.
- Attendance is low and is not showing signs of improving.
- There has been a lot of change in senior leadership and this has had a negative impact on the quality of provision and on students' outcomes. The result is that the academy is less effective now than at the time of its previous inspection.
- A variety of steps have been taken to strengthen senior leadership but changes are too recent to have had a marked effect on improving inadequate teaching and achievement. The leadership provided for teachers who lead and manage subjects is not strong enough.
- Governance is inadequate. Since the previous inspection, the governing body has not ensured that the academy has improved its performance.

The school has the following strengths

- The majority of students are keen to learn and behave appropriately.
- There is effective teaching in a minority of lessons.
- While the effectiveness of the sixth form requires improvement to become good, sixth form students' achievement is better than that of students in Years 7 to 11.
- New senior leaders, the academy's sponsor, governors and other external partners recognise that the academy is not effective enough and understand what needs to be improved. They are starting to tackle weaknesses although their work is in its early stages.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons, looked at students' work, listened to students read and observed a range of other aspects of the academy's work.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of students and leaders. They also held discussions with representatives of the governing body, the academy's sponsor and external partners who are working with the academy.
- Inspectors took account of the views of the small number of parents who made these known to them, including those who used the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Documents were scrutinised, including: information relating to students' progress and attendance; performance management; minutes of the governing body meetings; and monitoring and evaluation records.

Inspection team

Joan McKenna, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Henderson	Additional Inspector
Ray Biglin	Additional Inspector
Gary Kelly	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- The academy is of broadly similar size to other secondary schools.
- It is sponsored by United Learning.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the Pupil Premium (additional government funding) is well above average.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportions of students who are supported at School Action and at School Action Plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, are above average.
- Alternative provision used by the academy includes Sheffield City College, Hillsborough College, Peaks College, Sprint Training, Youth Association South Yorkshire, Sheaf Training, Sheffield Notschool and Recycle.
- There has been a change of Principal since the last inspection and some temporary arrangements for the leadership of the academy have been put in place. The current Principal took up post in September 2012, initially working part-time and subsequently full-time from 1 October 2012. He is seconded from a school in another local authority.
- A National Leader of Education from the Dean Trust, which is a multi-academy trust, has supported the academy since May 2012 when the previous Principal left. The academy is also working in partnership with a Teaching School.
- Four members of the senior leadership team joined the academy in September 2012.
- Twenty-five of the 75 teachers took up post in September 2012, 18 of these new appointees are newly qualified teachers.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the quality of teaching is always good or better, so as to raise attainment and improve students' achievement, including mathematics and especially English, by:
 - taking swift steps to deal with inadequate teaching
 - providing further professional development and targeted support to meet the needs of teachers, especially those who are newly qualified, and checking that this is having a positive impact on their teaching
 - ensuring that teachers take account of what students already know, the progress they have made and their targets when planning lessons in order to match work closely to the full range of students' learning needs
 - ensuring that the tasks and strategies used in lessons interest students and make them keen to learn
 - giving students detailed feedback on how to improve their work
 - improving students' skills in literacy, communication and numeracy so that these are good enough to help them make good progress in all subjects
 - narrowing the gaps in attainment and progress between different groups of students so that they all achieve equally well, particularly boys and students with special educational needs
 - modifying the curriculum so that it enables all students to achieve well.

- Improve behaviour and attendance by:
 - ensuring that all staff follow an agreed strategy for managing students’ behaviour so that the low level misbehaviour and occasional more serious incidents are eradicated
 - ensuring that the recently introduced strategies for improving attendance and reducing persistent absence are implemented effectively so that attendance rises and is at least in line with the national average.

- Improve the leadership, management and governance of the academy so that they become fully effective and secure rapid improvements in teaching and outcomes for students by:
 - ensuring that all leaders, especially those who lead and manage subjects, and governors have the knowledge, skills and understanding to carry out their roles effectively
 - academy sponsors ensuring that the capacity to make and sustain substantial improvement over time in all aspects of the academy’s work is clearly demonstrable
 - implementing plans for improvement and carefully checking that they are having the intended impact.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Students' attainment on entry to the academy is low. It remains low by the time they leave at age 16.
- There has been very little improvement in the proportion of students gaining five or more good examination grades including English and mathematics over the past three years. The figure has remained below the government's minimum expectations for students' attainment.
- Students' progress is inadequate, including in the key subjects of English and mathematics. There was a little improvement in the proportion of students making the expected amount of progress in English and mathematics in 2012, although progress in both subjects remains well below the latest national figures.
- Students' skills in literacy, communication and numeracy are weak and this hinders their progress in other subjects. For example, some students cannot read and understand clearly the information they are given in lessons.
- There are gaps between the attainment and progress of different groups of students, with the achievement of boys and students with special educational needs being of particular concern. Boys attain less well than girls within almost all groups. For example, only 16% of boys attained five or more good examination grades including English and mathematics in 2012 as compared with 45% of girls. Only 5.6% of boys with special educational needs supported at School Action attained these results.
- The gap in attainment between students eligible for the Pupil Premium and other students narrowed in 2012 when compared with 2011. However, far fewer boys than girls in this group attained five or more good examination grades including English and mathematics.
- Since the academy is not enabling all groups of students to achieve equally well, it is not promoting equality of opportunity successfully.
- Occasionally, achievement is better. The work in some students' books and learning in some lessons is sound and occasionally good. There was greater success in vocational courses at the higher grades. Examination results in the sixth form are broadly in line with the national average and sixth form students' achievement, while requiring improvement to become good, is better than that of younger students.
- Overall, however, students' current attainment and progress is low and lost ground is not being made up rapidly enough. This means that too many students are leaving the academy ill-equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Academic outcomes show that teaching has not helped students to make enough progress over time. There is still too little teaching that is good or better and too much that is inadequate.
- Planning for lessons is weak. Insufficient account is taken of information about the levels that students are working at, their progress or their targets when setting work. This means that the tasks teachers set are very often either too hard for some students or too easy for others.
- Weaknesses in students' basic skills, especially in literacy, are not tackled well enough by teachers and developing these skills is not given a high enough priority. Students with the lowest literacy levels find it hard to understand the work they are given.
- A limited number of teaching methods are used and often these do not capture students' interest or make sure that they are actively involved in lessons. Opportunities are missed to promote students' confidence, communication and social skills through paired and group work or through working on tasks that may have more than one possible solution and involve students finding things out for themselves.
- Too many lessons are disrupted by a considerable minority of students. The shortcomings in teaching contribute to this. However, too many students deliberately interrupt their own and

others' learning despite the best efforts of teachers and support staff. Often this is not well or consistently managed. Dealing with this is a particular challenge for some of the large number of teachers who are new to the profession but experienced staff and leaders also encounter difficulties.

- Dealing with poor behaviour takes teachers' time away from teaching those who want to learn, and reduces the quality of what they are able to do. For example, when teachers struggle to gain the attention of the whole class they are unable to give detailed explanations of the concepts being studied or question students closely to check their understanding.
- The majority of students are prepared to learn and do as they are asked. Some express frustration with those who interfere with their learning. Many sit patiently and passively waiting for lessons to continue.
- The feedback that students receive about their work and how to improve it is very variable in quality and generally not detailed enough. There are some positive examples which help students understand what they need to do to make their work better, but not enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- Senior leaders report that behaviour in the academy has improved recently. It has not, however, improved sufficiently. Too much disruption in lessons on the part of a considerable minority of students, and some other more extreme instances of unacceptable behaviour by a few, mean that it is still inadequate.
- Senior leaders are now making it clear that unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated. As a consequence the rates of exclusions remain high. There have been over 60 fixed-term exclusions so far this term. Some of these have been for persistent disruption and a small number for more serious matters.
- The lack of respect for others shown by this considerable minority of students displays weaknesses in their moral and social development.
- Only a small number of parents made their views known to inspectors but of those who did, less than one-third said that students are well behaved. Only a third of staff who returned questionnaires said that behaviour was good.
- Instances of bullying are reported. Some students who spoke with inspectors, and just over a third of parents who made their views known, consider that bullying is dealt with well but other students, and just under a third of parents, feel that it is not. Nevertheless, most students spoken with say that they feel safe in the academy.
- The majority of students behave appropriately and try to follow the academy's expectations in relation to their conduct and uniform. Most are content to follow routines in lessons but show little enthusiasm for learning. Students are not used to using their initiative or organising their own learning. Some push themselves but others are content to do the minimum.
- Attendance has been low for the past few years, especially for students in Years 10 and 11. Persistent absence is high. New strategies to improve attendance have been introduced but they are yet to have any significant impact. Attendance at this point in the academic year is the same as it was last year.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- A lack of effective leadership in the past has prevented the academy from improving since the previous inspection. As a result, systems and procedures for leading and managing the academy and for evaluating its progress are underdeveloped.
- Weaknesses have not been tackled with sufficient urgency or effectiveness since the previous inspection. For example, arrangements for leading and improving teaching are not sufficiently robust. There has not been enough carefully targeted professional development to help teachers improve their teaching. The curriculum is not meeting the needs of all students well enough as

not all courses enable them to achieve successfully.

- The skills of teachers who lead and manage subjects are underdeveloped. There is not a consistent and shared clarity of purpose and some leaders lack the knowledge, skills or experience to carry out their roles effectively and to lead their teams of staff.
- Recently, suitable steps have been taken by the academy's sponsor to strengthen senior leadership through the brokering of support from the Dean Trust and the involvement of its National Leader in Education, as well as through other consultancy support. This has been helpful and has brought about some tightening of procedures, such as the performance management of staff and for ensuring that the Pupil Premium (additional government funding) is spent appropriately. This work is now being built upon by the new Principal and senior leadership team.
- Leaders know what improvements need to be made and some actions have been taken to tackle weaknesses. There are suitable plans in place for further developments. However, this work is at a very early stage. The improvements that are evident are not yet widespread nor have they been in place long enough to show that they can have a lasting impact.
- The academy's sponsor has more recently given a stronger lead to the academy's work.

■ **The governance of the school**

- A lack of clarity about the role of the governing body in relation to that of the sponsor has hampered its effectiveness. Governance has not provided the level of challenge to the academy that is required. The sponsor has now clarified respective roles and responsibilities and is providing training to improve governance. This work is at a very early stage.

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	131896
Local authority	Not Applicable
Inspection number	406458

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1044
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Goldsack
Principal	Russell Heritage
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2010
Telephone number	0114 2392631
Fax number	0114 2399666
Email address	enquiries@sheffield-academy.org

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