

# Goldington Academy

Haylands Way, Bedford, MK41 9BX

**Inspection dates** 8–9 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
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.

- Pupils make good progress and reach above-average standards thanks to good teaching.
- In speaking, writing, mathematics and science, pupils often do particularly well and reach high standards.
- In most lessons, work is set at the right level for pupils of all abilities. Some teaching is outstanding.
- The school prepares pupils well for the future, especially in making sure they have good writing, speaking, numeracy and computer skills.
- Pupils behave well and their attitudes to learning are often outstanding.
- They feel safe, and say that any rare bullying incidents are usually dealt with well.
- The new headteacher is giving excellent direction for the school to improve after a period of significant staff changes and a fall in pupils' rates of progress.
- The school has accurately pinpointed the work it needs to do to improve further.
- Leaders support teachers well and provide good training to help improve their skills.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' reading is not as good as their speaking and writing, and the new systems to resolve this are not yet working as well as they should.
- Occasionally, the work teachers set in lessons is not demanding enough to get the most out of the more-able pupils.
- In a small number of lessons, the pace of work is not consistently fast enough to promote good progress.
- The progress made by a small number of pupils with special educational needs is not checked frequently enough, so the work set for them is not always at exactly the right level.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 teachers in 37 lessons or parts of lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff and pupils, and inspectors spoke to members of the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at the school's work, information about the achievement of pupils, development planning and the school's self-evaluation.
- They took into account 44 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

## Inspection team

Edward Wheatley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Turner	Additional Inspector
Hazel Pulley	Additional Inspector
David Talbot	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most secondary schools.
- Pupils come from mainly White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average, although very few are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is below average.
- There is no additional provision for pupils off the main school site.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher took up his post in September 2012, after a period when the school was led by an acting headteacher and there were several other changes in staffing.
- The school became an academy in April 2011. The predecessor school, Goldington Middle School, was judged to be outstanding when it was last inspected in April 2007.

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

- Raise standards in reading, by making sure the agreed approaches to improving reading are fully established in all classes.
- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by making sure:
  - work is always hard enough for all pupils
  - the pace of learning in lessons is fast so that pupils learn quickly
  - information about the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs is used carefully to plan work that fully meets these pupils' learning needs.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress from above expected levels of attainment on entering the school. Attainment and progress are improving again after a dip in recent years, and the previous small gaps in the progress made by different groups of pupils have largely been closed.
- Pupils' progress is best in writing and speaking, in mathematics and in science, where some make outstanding progress and reach particularly high standards. By Year 8 many pupils are more than a year ahead of where they would normally expect to be.
- The progress pupils make in reading varies. Many sound words out accurately and can explain what they read clearly and confidently. However, some do not read well for their age, and the standards they reach are not as good as in other subjects. Reading is improving, but the recently introduced efforts to teach reading more effectively and to make sure pupils have time to read are not yet established equally well in all classes.
- Pupils' writing skills are good, and often highly developed. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson on digestion, pupils wrote clearly about how food is digested, using correct terminology, adjectives and complex sentences because the teacher encouraged them to do so.
- Pupils have good mathematical skills. They apply mathematical rules correctly so that when they work out calculations they usually get the right answers. Their mental calculation skills are good because they practise them regularly.
- Pupils of all abilities usually do well, although occasionally small numbers of pupils do not make quite the progress they are capable of. This is sometimes because work is not hard enough, or because the progress of some pupils with special educational needs is not checked to make sure work is at the right level for them.
- Most pupils with special educational needs, disabled pupils and those at the early stages of learning English make good and sometimes exceptional progress. This is because work is specially planned for them and support is careful to point them in the right direction in their learning. They are also given plenty of opportunities to gain confidence in working by themselves.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make good progress because they are identified in teachers' planning, their progress is closely monitored and work is tailored to their specific needs.
- Learning in lessons is often outstanding. In these instances, and where learning is good, pupils work extremely well together. They respect each other's opinions, help each other and share resources well in practical work. This helps to develop their social, moral and cultural skills.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers plan lessons that are demanding and interesting. Teachers usually use what they know about pupils' progress, and how they learn best, to make sure work is demanding but matched closely to their ability levels.
- In the best lessons teachers' expectations are high and they ask searching questions to keep pupils on their toes and continually check their understanding. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson on statistical probability, pupils developed an excellent understanding of theoretical and

experimental probability. The teacher organised the work carefully so that different ability groups could learn at their own pace. An excellent balance between the teacher's probing questions, explanations and discussions promoted pupils' understanding and progress exceptionally well. Pupils were curious about the differences between theoretical and experimental outcomes and were fully involved in discussing the reasons with each other.

- In most lessons there is a strong focus on helping pupils to become independent learners. Teachers encourage pupils to investigate, and both teachers and classroom assistants give pupils with special educational needs regular opportunities to work by themselves in order to build their self-confidence.
- The range of subjects taught is wide and is enriched by trips, including some residential ones, and visitors. These often encourage pupils to work together, to share their ideas and to consider the value of each other's points of view. This enhances pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Occasionally work is too easy, or does not build on the progress pupils have previously made. This is particularly the case for a small number of pupils with special educational needs. On other occasions, the pace of learning slows down and pupils do not learn as much as they could during the lesson.
- Teachers' marking is generally good, with clear indications of how well pupils are doing and how to improve their work. Pupils know what their targets are, and that if they reach them quickly, they will be set more challenging targets.
- Teachers provide regular homework that supports the work done in school. Most pupils appreciate that homework complements their classwork and contributes to their learning, particularly their ability to work on their own.
- Parents and carers feel that their children learn well and that teaching is good. They regularly comment in pupils' diaries about how well they think their children are making progress.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils enjoy school and have outstanding attitudes to learning. They join in activities in lessons enthusiastically, concentrate and work hard. Around school pupils typically behave well and show consideration and kindness towards each other. Relationships within lessons are outstanding.
  - There is little bullying, and pupils have a very good understanding of the different forms bullying can take. They know who to go to for help, and feel confident in doing so. During the inspection a pupil reported an incident of racism involving a small number of other pupils, and the school used well-planned procedures to deal with the incident immediately.
  - The school has maintained above-average levels of attendance. Its good systems for dealing with absence include, where necessary, sensitive support for families to make sure their children attend school regularly.
  - Pupils are well cared for. The school provides considerable support for families or pupils experiencing difficulties, and for pupils who struggle with learning. It provides individual help and guidance for pupils as they need it, and until they have caught up with work or overcome their learning problem.
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**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher provides excellent direction for school improvement. His plans are supported by other leaders and give a renewed drive to improving teaching and accelerating the pace of pupils' progress after the recent dip. The school's capacity to improve further is good.
  - The school accurately identifies where it has strengths and what it needs to do to improve. It has set a high standard for the expected quality of teaching. This is evident in teachers' demanding performance targets, which are closely linked to how well pupils make progress and directly linked to salary scales. Good-quality coaching and training for individual staff are gradually raising the quality of all teaching to at least good, and helping the good teaching to become outstanding.
  - There are few links with the local authority, but the headteacher is exploring ways in which this can improve to the benefit of the school. Close links with other local schools provide a wide range of professional support for teachers. Teachers work closely with the lower schools pupils come from to establish their attainment levels when they first arrive, so they can make sure pupils quickly make good progress.
  - The small gaps in performance between different groups have narrowed because the school is committed to making sure all pupils have an equal chance to succeed. Good personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development well, and includes many opportunities for pupils to learn about and respect the values and beliefs of other cultures. This helps to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to eliminate all forms of discrimination.
  - Parents and carers are pleased with the school. They generally feel well supported and valued. A parent forum helps to promote their views, and to take them into account when planning school improvement.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body questions senior leaders thoroughly about the effectiveness of the school. It works closely with them to decide on improvement priorities, and how the budget is spent. For example, it checks carefully to make sure pupil premium funding is used to improve the progress of the pupils supported. It makes sure that the performance management policy is applied rigorously, especially in linking teachers' progression on salary scales to pupils' progress. The governing body is well informed about the quality of teaching and how well pupils perform compared to similar schools nationally, and has regular training to make sure it continually supports and challenges the school. It makes sure that national requirements for safeguarding pupils are fully met, including the procedures for checking staff before they are appointed.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136552
<b>Local authority</b>	N/a
<b>Inspection number</b>	395534

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	671
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Diane Field
<b>Headteacher</b>	Francis Galbraith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/a
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