

Tapton School

Darwin Lane, Sheffield, S10 5RG

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Students learn exceptionally well. The proportion of students making and exceeding national rates of progress, across all years, particularly in English and mathematics, are high. As a result, attainment by the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form is equally high.
- Students hone a wide range of reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills, to very high standards. As a result, they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment. Students who are disabled and those who have special educational needs achieve as well as their peers. Those for whom the pupil premium provides support also achieve extremely well.
- Much of the teaching is outstanding and never less than consistently good in most subjects. Teachers and other adults have high expectations and generate high levels of commitment to learning in, and beyond, lessons, across all years.
- Students' attitudes to learning and academy life are exemplary. Their pride in the academy is shown by their outstanding manners and attendance. Parents, staff and students are highly positive about behaviour. They are similarly assured about the extent to which all young people are safe, on and off the academy's site. Bullying is rare, and students actively try to prevent it from happening.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are uncompromising about the pursuit of excellence in all of the academy's work. All subject and pastoral leaders and managers are hugely ambitious for all students and lead by example. Governors robustly hold senior leaders to account for the academy's performance. Together with the headteacher, they ensure increasingly effective partnership work takes place with other schools across the city.
- The sixth form is outstanding. High-quality teaching and excellent guidance ensure that students make outstanding progress across Years 12 and 13, and are very well prepared for their future lives.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 61 lessons, of which five were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, governors and academy staff, including senior and middle managers.
- Inspectors took account of the 80 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.
- They observed the academy's work and looked at a number of documents, including the academy's own data on current students' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, minutes of governors' meetings, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents pertaining to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Andrew Swallow, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Henderson	Additional Inspector
Gary Kirkley	Additional Inspector
Keith Massett	Additional Inspector
James McGrath	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This academy is much larger than the average sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, largely those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is below that seen nationally, but in line for those at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The academy meets the current floor standard, which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The academy is part of a formal Academy Trust, collaborating with Chaucer secondary school and several partner primary schools.
- There is a specialist on-site Vision Support Centre.
- Approximately 40 students in Years 10 and 11 follow a range of vocational courses in colleges and other work-related settings across the city.
- The academy has achieved the Healthy School status and is a National Support and Leadership Development School for the National College for School Leaders. It is a specialist school for sciences and the arts.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Academy staff are not complacent. There are no key areas for improvement to sustain the academy's high achievement and standards that are not addressed by leaders and managers in relevant action plans.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The vast majority of students begin Year 7 with above average standards in English and mathematics. By the end of Year 11, standards in almost all subjects, and especially in English and mathematics, are high. This is because teaching is consistently strong in lessons and teachers and other adults support all learners exceptionally well beyond the school day.
- All groups of students make outstanding progress across Years 7 to 11. They develop high levels of confidence in articulating ideas, presenting viewpoints and listening to their peers. Those who are disabled, or who have special educational needs, also show outstanding progress in lessons and in their work. This is because the curriculum is well matched to their needs and teaching assistants and specialist teachers are judiciously deployed. Visually impaired students are exceptionally well integrated into school life and also achieve outstandingly well. The school has been successful in reducing attainment gaps of students known to be entitled to free school meals. Very well-conceived use of the pupil premium has successfully enhanced one-to-one teaching opportunities, provided additional teaching time for smaller groups and enabled the distribution of electronic notebooks to individuals to support their learning at home. In Years 10 and 11, the small proportion that follows courses at other colleges and institutions, for part of the week, attend and achieve very well indeed.
- A very high number of parents who responded to Parent View believe that their children enjoy school and are achieving well. Inspectors found this to be so in the vast majority of lessons. For example, in a Year 13 French lesson, all students developed high levels of confidence to talk fluently in the foreign language about the problems of immigration in France, with excellent pronunciation and intonation. Similarly, in a Year 11 drama lesson, all students showed remarkable maturity in analysing a dramatic performance. In all lessons, students show a real appetite for learning, with very high levels of motivation and self-discipline.
- Sixth-form students are very well catered for, and attain high standards at A level, and exceptionally high AS outcomes, in most subjects. They develop excellent research skills, working by themselves and intently in many lessons. Almost all, consequently, continue successfully into higher education, training, or employment.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Across Years 7 to 11 teaching in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is outstanding. It is never less than consistently good. As a result, students make excellent progress. Teaching is equally outstanding in the sixth form, where students are invited to learn in an increasingly independent manner and are challenged to the full.
- Teachers have consistently high expectations and plan lessons to interest and stimulate learners of all ages. They create highly positive climates in lessons throughout the academy, so that students are immersed in and enjoy their learning. Teaching assistants are managed particularly effectively, supporting individuals and small groups of students with special educational needs exceptionally well.
- A range of interesting activities and experiences excites students across the curriculum. For example, Year 10 students persevered very well to investigate the meaning of a solution in mathematics, in small groups, independently of the teacher. They discussed avidly, in pairs, the morals of transplant surgery and organ donation, in religious studies. In a Year 9 geography lesson, students are inspired by their work on Third World countries to create their own charities, using computers effectively to research, then organise their emerging ideas.
- In a great many lessons, teachers routinely check students' understanding, intervening when necessary, with notable impact on their learning. They provide many opportunities for students to enhance their communication skills. In scenarios that require accurate mathematical

understanding, they ensure that all students are confident in measuring and calculating, and in representing key data in graphs and charts.

- In a minority of lessons, some students are provided with the same work regardless of ability. Senior leaders have already identified this as an area for improvement, and training opportunities are in place and appropriately linked to teachers' individual needs.
- While there are examples of excellent marking in almost all subjects which enable students to know how well they are doing and what to do next, this is not uniformly the case. Again, bespoke training has already been introduced, and to good effect, to address this issue.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Around the academy students' behaviour is impeccable. They are extremely polite and courteous to adults and visitors, and say how proud they are to be part of Tapton academy. Parents indicate how positive students' attitudes are towards school and how much they enjoy their learning. In lessons, their attitudes are exemplary. The academy's documentation shows that the conduct of students who are educated off-site during part of the week, is equally of a very high order. Attendance of all groups of students, on and off-site, is high.
- Students are fully aware of unsafe situations and show confidence in dealing with them, should they occur. They are especially assured in talking about cyber and homophobic bullying. In their roles as academy councillors, through discussions during morning registrations and in guidance sessions, they take active steps to ensure that it does not happen in the academy.
- Students say that they always feel safe in the academy and are confident that they can get support if they have any concerns. Sixth-form students are especially active in supporting younger students, especially in developing key reading skills. Pastoral staff secure very effectively the well-being of students whose circumstances may render them vulnerable and ensure that they are fully integrated and involved in daily affairs.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is hugely ambitious on the part of all students and promotes an uncompromising and highly successful drive to maintain high levels of achievement and personal development for all students. Senior leaders share his passion for Tapton to be the 'very best.'
- Systems to ensure an accurate and up-to-date picture of the progress of all groups of students are of the highest order. As a consequence, there have been notable successes recently in the narrowing of performance gaps between different groups of students, including those whose circumstances may render them vulnerable and those known to be entitled to free school meals.
- All leaders and managers ensure that self-evaluation is robust and that major improvement actions are concerted and carefully planned. There is especially high-quality training and support to sustain excellence in teaching. Performance management of staff is very well organised and identifies clearly individuals' precise development needs. Leaders and managers across the academy evaluate the impact of training thoroughly, to ensure maximum effect. The headteacher makes the right decisions about teachers' movements up the salary scale on the basis of robust information about the quality of their teaching.
- The academy's curriculum is very well matched to students' needs. Students with visual impairment are particularly well catered for in all subjects. There is a good range of academic courses, underpinned by the school's science and arts specialisms, and appropriate off-site vocational and work-related experiences. Extensive sporting, musical and performing opportunities, and a wealth of extra-curricular activities, make strong contributions to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The daily tutor programme, and guidance lessons, raise students' self-esteem and successfully promote their personal qualities. They support very effectively the academy's successful drive to promote equality of opportunity and to

tackle immediately any discrimination that may arise.

- Parents believe that the academy communicates very effectively with them about their children's progress. Excellent and successful partnerships exist with local schools, within, and beyond, the Academy Trust. The local authority promotes effectively the academy's collaboration with other schools, as part of a city-wide strategy to raise securely the quality of teaching and rapidly improve achievement.
- **The governance of the school** is outstanding.
 - The governing body receives regular and up-to-date information about the performance of the school, including data about how well students are achieving. They have an excellent understanding about the quality of teaching, as a result of their links with individual subjects and their visits to lessons. Minutes of meetings show that they are confident in challenging the headteacher and senior staff. The headteacher has made sure that the governors are perceptive in their discussions about the value of spending decisions and the impact these have had on students' learning and progress. This has led to some good decisions about what the academy spends the pupil-premium funding on. For example, governors have authorised one-to-one teaching and the recruitment of extra teaching time for additional, weekly lessons for students who have not kept pace with others in their classes. The headteacher also provides governors with detailed information about the salaries of all staff and decisions about individual teachers' applications for promotion. As a result, governors have an excellent understanding of the effectiveness of the management of teachers' performance across the school. They take up training opportunities.

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	138069
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	398288

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	1,657
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	479
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Bagley
Headteacher	David Bowes
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0114 267 1414
Fax number	0114 294 1155
Email address	enquiries@taptonschool.co.uk

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