

Nottingham Girls' Academy

Robin's Wood Road, Nottingham, NG8 3LD

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Effective leadership and governance have resulted in rapidly improved teaching and learning in nearly all subjects. Currently, the large majority of teaching is good.
- Achievement is good because pupils make rapid progress from low starting points to gain average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- Behaviour and safety are good. A strength is the pupils' attitude to learning in lessons. They work hard and their expectations of what they can achieve are good.
- The sixth form is good. Pupils benefit from a wide range of courses that are well taught.
- The leadership of teaching is extremely effective. The academy has a high level of expertise amongst its senior leaders and training for teachers is of a high standard. Consequently, all teachers are working very hard to improve their teaching.
- Literacy is promoted well across the different subjects in the academy.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The achievement of a few of the most able pupils is not as high as it could be because their work in lessons is not challenging enough.
- The proportion of teaching that is outstanding is not high enough.
- Numeracy is not as well promoted in other subjects as literacy is.
- Some subject leaders are not as effective as others in leading teaching and learning because of their inexperience.
- Pupils' cultural development is not promoted well enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 43 lessons taught by 39 teachers.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Academy Council, a representative from the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust, the Principal, Executive Principal, staff, and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of a recent parent survey carried out by the academy. There were insufficient responses to the on-line questionnaire Parent View.
- School assessment data, self-evaluation information, procedures for the performance management of teachers and the school's improvement plan were scrutinised.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined by inspectors.
- Forty nine questionnaires completed by the staff were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Tim Bristow, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ann Addison

Additional Inspector

Beverley Mabey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized single sex secondary academy.
- The majority of pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest group in the academy are the Pakistani heritage pupils.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average (those supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs). The proportion supported by school action is above average.
- An above average proportion of the pupils is eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The academy meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A few pupils who have social and emotional difficulties attend alternative provision at The Zone and Fairmead.
- The Principal took up his post in January 2012. He is supported by an Executive Principal.
- The academy opened in September 2011.
- The sixth form opened in September 2012.
- The academy is sponsored by the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust. They are responsible for the governance of all the academies they sponsor. A Local Academy Council is appointed by the Trust.

What does the academy need to do to improve further?

- Provide greater challenge for the most-able pupils in lessons so that they achieve higher standards by:
 - ensuring that when teachers talk to the class their high expectations of these pupils are explicit from the start
 - providing more demanding work in all subjects that is designed to stretch these pupils and make them really think
- Strengthen leadership so that all subject leaders are able to lead teaching, learning and achievement to the same high standard in their subjects.
- Improve teaching programmes by ensuring:
 - numeracy is reinforced as effectively as literacy in other subjects
 - pupils' cultural development is promoted more routinely in lessons
 - the work given to pupils in some vocational subjects is more challenging.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards are rising rapidly in most subjects. In 2012 the proportion that gained five GCSE graded C or above including English and mathematics was broadly average.
- Standards are rising strongly in English and mathematics. However, whilst pupils make good progress in mathematics it is slightly less than in English. This is because the quality of teaching varies considerably at times, with some requiring improvement.
- Academy-held data shows that this year the proportion gaining a GCSE graded C or above in these subjects is set to rise. This is because a large proportion of pupils with very low starting points on entry (many with standards approximately a year behind the average) are now exceeding the expected rate of progress. This is narrowing the gap between the standards in the academy and the national average.
- In the sixth form, pupils make rapid progress and nearly all are currently on course to gain their targeted grades both at AS and A-level. This is because teaching is rarely less than good with a growing proportion that is outstanding.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding achieve similar standards in English and mathematics and do as well as pupils with similar starting points.
- Last year, pupils were entered early for examinations in English and mathematics. This was of little benefit to the pupils as the strategy was not well enough considered. The much improved approach introduced this year is producing stronger results.
- Achievement is not outstanding because the proportion of pupils that gain the highest grade A*-A in English and mathematics is lower than average. This is because in lessons, a few with the potential to gain this grade are not stretched as much as they could be.
- Some pupils who have social and emotional difficulties and who are in danger of permanent exclusion benefit from alternative provision. They remain in education and go on to further training or work after Year 11 because the well-planned courses provided help pupils gain the qualifications they need.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language as well as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because the extra help they receive is effective.
- Some minority ethnic groups, such as Pakistani pupils who are the largest group in the academy, make better progress than the rest.

The quality of teaching is good

- The large majority of teaching is good or better. Academy records show that the proportion that is outstanding is growing, but it is not yet high enough for teaching to be judged outstanding.
- In some subjects, such as English, science, modern foreign languages, P.E. and the performing arts teaching is good. In others the quality of teaching is more variable. This is the case in mathematics, history, geography and in some vocational subjects. Good and sometimes outstanding teaching is evident in all these subjects, but there is also a small minority that

requires improvement.

- There is some excellent teaching. For example, in an outstanding mathematics lesson, pupils who in the past have not found mathematics easy were all working with enthusiasm to solve problems associated with the area of shapes. They worked together extremely cooperatively on the interesting, but challenging tasks presented to them.
- In the best teaching teachers use information about pupils effectively to plan lessons that meet their needs. Work is interesting and is often based on real life situations. For example, in a good geography lesson, pupils took a keen interest in the analysis of retail outlets in the local area.
- In the sixth form, the pupils benefit from being taught in small groups. Teachers have very successfully exploited this opportunity. Pupils make rapid progress because of the detailed individual help teachers are able to offer them.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because of the high quality of the individual help they receive from teaching assistants and learning mentors in lessons.
- In some of the vocational subjects, for example in textiles, hospitality and catering where teaching requires improvement, the pace of learning is too slow. This is because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. For example, some pupils spoken to were content that they were working towards a pass grade and had few ambitions to aim for a merit or distinction in their course work.
- In other vocational courses, such as in science and the performing arts, teaching is good or outstanding and expectations are high.
- Sometimes in lessons that require improvement teachers spend too long talking. When they question pupils they do not pay sufficient attention to the answers so that they could further explore pupils understanding. More able pupils are not always made to think deeply enough and too frequently they are given activities very similar to those being completed by others.
- Pupils report how helpful they find marking and inspectors agree. In most subjects, pupils benefit from good advice on the steps they need to take to reach their targets.
- Reading is well taught, not only in English but in other subjects such as science, history and geography. This is because teachers have taken a conscientious approach to their responsibility for teaching literacy skills as well as their own subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, work hard and cooperatively together. They have high expectations of what they can achieve and are looking forward to the next stage in their education, training or work with enthusiasm.
- Spiritual, moral and social development is promoted well. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, pupils were preparing for a speaking and listening assessment. They listened to each other's talks carefully offering sensitive and useful advice on how they could make improvements.

- Pupils feel safe in school because behaviour and anti-bullying management are effective. All parents that responded to the academy questionnaires agree that behaviour is well-managed.
- Discrimination is tackled effectively by the academy. Pupils report that any form of racial bullying, such as name calling is extremely rare. The academy, on its web-site, in tutor groups and assemblies gives pupils good advice and help so that they are well-equipped to respond if they feel that they are being bullied.
- Attendance is average. It has risen since the academy opened, but a few pupils still persistently miss school.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal, Executive Principal and other senior leaders have a very clear ambition for the success of the pupils they educate. This is uncompromising and all pupils and staff are expected to aspire for excellence. There have been rapid improvements to teaching, behaviour and achievement over the last two years.
- The procedures to lead improvements in teaching are effective. Teachers have access to high quality training. However, leadership is not yet outstanding because some subject leaders do not have sufficient impact on teaching and achievement and some are relatively inexperienced. While teaching and achievement in one or two subjects that were weak is improving there is not yet a history of sustained success that would demonstrate the effectiveness of these leaders.
- The development plan is well constructed and designed to address known areas of relative weakness. School leaders are rigorous in their evaluations of performance.
- The equality of opportunity of all groups of pupils is strengthening because of the good teaching that is enabling most of them to make good or better progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs as well as those whose circumstances make them vulnerable receive good support from a range of partners. Those that benefit from alternative provision are also well cared for.
- Pupils, including in the sixth form, receive good advice and guidance on the courses and subjects that are best suited to them. Subject opportunities are broadening and the numbers of pupils opting to take academic GCSE courses is growing as teaching improves.
- There are too few occasions when cultural diversity is celebrated and promoted. Understandably the priority has been to raise standards, but there are not opportunities taken in lessons to promote cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the Trust and the local academy council has been instrumental in improving the academy over the last 18 months. They offer it a high degree of expertise based on their depth of experience of school improvement. Currently the Trust is further developing the local council's effectiveness to act as critical friend to the Principal by providing training to panel members so that they better understand assessment information and can compare the school's performance with others. Safeguarding procedures overseen centrally by the Trust are very secure. The Trust has responsibility for the governance of performance management of staff and the use of pupil premium funding. Both responsibilities are carried out with rigour. Members of the council have a clear understanding of how pupil premium funds are spent and their impact on pupils. There are good procedures in place to ensure any

promotion is linked directly to teachers' impact on achievement. Finances are managed efficiently.

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	137184
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	399869

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	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	494
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	47
Appropriate authority	The Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust
Chair	Kate Ransom
Principal	Peter Holyk
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0115 9299401
Fax number	0115 9425979
Email address	admin@nottinghamgirlsacademy.org

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