

The Brunts Academy

The Park, Mansfield, NG18 2AT

Inspection dates 25–26 April 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.

- The percentage of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics is above average. This represents good achievement given the students' starting points.
- Teaching is good and continues to improve, and as a result all groups of students make good progress and achieve well in their learning.
- The development of students' literacy and numeracy skills is good. Most students make good or better progress in these areas.
- Students behave well, enjoy what the academy offers and feel safe. They say they feel valued and respected and appreciate the variety of activities that are available to them.
- The range of subjects on offer meets students' needs well, with a good balance between academic and work-related courses.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team are uncompromising in their drive for improvement in all parts of the academy's work. They have successfully raised the quality of teaching and have high expectations for what everyone involved in the academy can achieve.
- The governors are well informed. They are dedicated to providing both challenge and support for the academy, and are committed to improving its performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough, and some teaching still requires improvement.
- Although most marking is thorough and gives good advice to students about improving their work, this good practice is not consistent in all subjects.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Teaching has improved recently and is now typically good, but the students' achievement has not caught up and their progress still varies across subjects and between courses.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 50 lessons, six of which were seen together with senior staff. They observed tutor times for different groups of students and an assembly. They examined students' books, talked to students about their work, and heard students read in lessons.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders including the headteacher, five groups of students, three governors, a representative from the local authority and two parents and carers.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 86 parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, three letters from parents and carers, and 149 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the academy's work and reviewed a wide range of documents, including: the academy's own data on students' recent examinations and current progress; its self-evaluation records and development plan; information on the work of staff, training arrangements for teachers and other staff; checks on teaching, students' behaviour and attendance; responses to concerns raised by parents and carers; the safeguarding of students; and details of governance.

Inspection team

Ann Behan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Steven Goldsmith	Additional Inspector
Charlotte Evers	Additional Inspector
Rena Saggu	Additional Inspector
Richard Masterton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Brunts Academy is larger than the average secondary school, and specialises in performing arts. It became an academy on 1 January 2012. The predecessor school, The Brunts School, was judged to be satisfactory when it was last inspected by Ofsted in September 2009.
- Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are well below national averages.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium, which in this school provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and students known to be eligible for free school meals, is average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A very small number of Key Stage 4 students receive part of their education away from the school site. These students are following work-related courses at Real Education, and Buxton Training.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy is part of two teaching alliances, a lead academy for 'Achievement for All', and a member of the Mansfield Learning Partnership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding, so pupils make more rapid progress across the main school and sixth form, by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan lesson activities that are at the right level of difficulty for students of all abilities
 - all teachers mark students' work frequently, tell them how to improve it, and check that they follow the advice they are given
 - students are encouraged to take more responsibility for their learning, so they improve their skills in working independently
 - students in the sixth form make consistently good progress in all subjects and courses, particularly in Year 13.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- GCSE results are rising, particularly in English and mathematics. The percentage of students gaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics is above the national average. This reflects good achievement for all groups of students.
- The academy has an early-entry policy for mathematics that allows students to take GCSE examinations in Year 10 and early in Year 11. This has had a positive impact on results in mathematics and more students are achieving grade C or higher by the end of the year. Some of the most-able students have gone on to achieve higher grades at the end of Year 11.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs progress as well as other groups because the academy provides additional support for each student that is tailored to their particular needs. They benefit from one-to-one and small-group teaching, and support in class from subject specialist teaching assistants.
- The average GCSE points score of the students known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with that attained by similar students across the country. They attain approximately a grade lower in English and mathematics than other students in the academy at the end of Key Stage 4, current academy records show that they are making good progress in line with other groups, and this gap is narrowing rapidly.
- Academy records on students known to be eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium show that they make good progress in developing their basic skills in numeracy and literacy because of the effective teaching and support that they receive.
- The small number of Key Stage 4 students who study work-related courses off site make good progress because of the good-quality, well-tailored provision. The arrangements for monitoring their progress, attendance and punctuality are good.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. It is rising in response to good teaching. However, there are still some variations across subjects, and students make better progress in Year 13 than in Year 12.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is improving and is now good in the main school and the sixth form, with examples of outstanding practice. No inadequate teaching was observed. Evidence from lesson observations and from looking at students' work shows that good and better teaching has helped all groups of students to do well.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers plan work that is challenging and builds well on students' knowledge. They provide activities that engage students' interest, ask searching questions to check students' progress, and provide extra help for those who are falling behind.
- In a Year 10 physical education lesson for girls on athletics and sprinting. Students were given clear guidance about the purpose of the lesson and built on the skills practised in a previous lesson. Those who needed additional support were given extra coaching from a trainee teacher. Students who could not take part in the physical activity had the opportunity to assess and evaluate the progress made by their classmates. The pace of learning was fast and enjoyable,

and students' progress was outstanding.

- Some lessons still require improvement. In these lessons work is not always at the right level to meet all students' needs, there is sometimes too much direction from the teacher, and students have too few opportunities to work on their own to solve problems for themselves. In some lessons teachers miss opportunities to give students the chance to extend their knowledge through independent learning and investigation.
- Regular and thorough marking in most subjects gives students clear guidance about what they need to do to improve their work. The best marking includes consistently good feedback from the teacher, and shows students responding to advice and in some cases assessing their own and other students' work. However, in a small number of cases written feedback does not give enough detail on how to improve work to the next level, and there is little evidence that the teacher has checked that students have taken advice.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, students known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those who speak English as an additional language all benefit from good help and guidance. Their progress is checked regularly and extra support is provided when it is needed. As a result, all these groups of students achieve well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour around the academy and in lessons is good. Students are polite and friendly, and show respect towards adults and towards one another.
- Relationships in lessons are good. Students work well together in teams and in groups. They respond to good quality teaching and show positive attitudes towards learning.
- Attendance is in line with the national average and is improving. The academy has worked hard to raise attendance and reduce persistent absence.
- Students say they enjoy attending the academy and feel safe. They say that staff care for them and teach them well. They value the variety of opportunities and activities provided for them, particularly those linked to the academy's performing arts specialism.
- Students are aware of different kinds of bullying including racist behaviour and homophobia. They told inspectors that bullying rarely happens, and on the few occasions when it does, it is mostly dealt with swiftly and effectively by the staff.
- In tutor time and lessons, teachers give students a good understanding of how to stay safe. They cover a variety of themes about the dangers and effects of drugs and substance abuse, and students are well informed about the dangers of the internet and cyber bullying.
- Sixth form students are good role models for younger students and make many positive contributions to the life of the academy.
- The majority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire felt that students were well behaved and cared for, and that the academy dealt with bullying effectively.

The leadership and management are good

- The academy is impressively well led by the headteacher and the senior leadership team. They have worked hard and effectively to raise achievement and improve teaching, and are very well supported by most staff who are keen for the academy to improve further.
- The academy is accurate and honest in judging its own performance. Senior staff and governors are well aware of its strengths and weaknesses.
- The systems for checking teaching are rigorous and thorough. Joint observations with members of the senior leadership team confirmed the accuracy of the academy's assessments of teaching and learning. However, not all subject leaders check so effectively on the marking of students' work.
- Senior staff meet regularly with teachers and middle leaders to discuss progress towards meeting annual objectives. Training is closely linked to ways to support staff to improve their skills in teaching and leadership and management. Any underperformance is dealt with quickly, and no members of staff are given salary increases unless their performance over time warrants them.
- Throughout the year staff take part in training to meet their specific needs. Staff work collaboratively to learn from one another and share their expertise. The academy also uses expertise from the local authority and other consultants to improve teaching and learning and leadership and management.
- Staff morale is high. The responses to the staff questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive about the leadership of the headteacher and the drive for improvement. Staff appreciate the training they have received and are proud to be part of the academy.
- Students in the main school and the sixth form are provided with a range of subjects and courses that meet their different needs and abilities well. There is a good mix of academic and work-related courses, including those linked to the performing arts specialism, and the academy arranges and oversees courses taught in other locations effectively. It works closely with three other schools to ensure a wide choice of subject for students entering the sixth form.
- A wide range of experiences and opportunities are provided in lessons and through a variety of clubs and activities beyond the school day. All these activities contribute well to students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.
- The additional funding received through the pupil premium initiative and the Year 7 catch-up programme is used sensibly to make sure that individual students get the help they need, and this additional support is well managed. As a result these students achieve well. The academy works hard to prevent discrimination and make sure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- The academy enjoys positive relationships with parents and the local community. Effective links with other agencies and schools lead to sharing of expertise and benefit from a wide range of partnerships.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are thorough, including risk assessments for when some students are educated away from the school site.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Leadership of the governing body is strong and well informed. Governors have a good understanding of how well the academy is performing. They are aware of the quality of teaching and learning, and the strategies the academy is using to bring about improvements. Well-chosen training has helped to ensure that they analyse outcomes such as examination performance compared to similar schools nationally, well and are involved fully in linking between staff pay rises closely to the effectiveness of teaching. They monitor expenditure closely, including the way pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up money is spent, and ensure that financial and other resources are used effectively to improve the quality of students' education.

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	137763
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	402769

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

Type of school	Academy converter
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	1513
Of which, number on roll in sixth form is	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Fowler
Executive Principal	Janice Addison (Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	N/a
Telephone number	01623 623149
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