

South Nottinghamshire Academy

Glebe Lane, Off Cropwell Road, Radcliffe on Trent, Nottingham, NG12 2FQ

Inspection dates

8–9 May 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 students make good progress as a result of effective teaching. In the academy's first-ever set of GCSE results in 2012, the students' achieved standards that were well-above average.
- The sixth form is good. Here also, the students make good progress as a result of good-quality teaching.
- Much of the teaching captures the students' interests and, in conjunction with the very good relationships that the teachers establish with the students, leads to the students having positive attitudes to learning.
- The students behave well in lessons and around the academy. They are generally courteous and well mannered towards each other, the staff and to visitors. Behaviour has improved rapidly this year, so that there have been significant reductions in instances of misbehaviour compared with the academy's first year of operation.
- Senior leaders have rapidly engendered a sense of community spirit and a collective sense of purpose at the academy. As a result, they are able to demonstrate notable improvements in the quality of teaching and in the students' achievement and behaviour in a short time.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although good overall, there are still variations in the quality of teaching, so that some teaching requires improvement.
- The students' attendance is below average in the main academy and is lower in the sixth form than in the rest of the academy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors saw 31 lessons in a broad range of subjects and age groups, an assembly, looked at students' work within lessons and scrutinised a sample from English, mathematics, and science separately.
- They held meetings with teachers, leaders and managers, and with representatives of the governing body and the Trust of which the academy is a part. They spoke with groups of students formally and many students in lessons and around the academy.
- The inspectors checked responses from parents and carers on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and other letters sent to the inspectors. They analysed questionnaires completed by 43 members of staff.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the academy's development plan and self-evaluation, policies and records of monitoring in relation to: the quality of teaching, the students' achievement, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding, and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Clive Moss, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Shannon Moore

Additional Inspector

Alan Brewerton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy opened in September 2011. It is well below the average size of secondary schools.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is around one third of the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well-below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The academy receives additional government funding for these students, known as the pupil premium.
- The academy meets the government's floor standards for the attainment and progress of students.
- The academy works with Central College Nottingham to make alternative provision for 40 students, who attend the College for one or two afternoons per week, depending on the course being studied. The College is also the academy sponsor.
- The academy specialises in sport and mathematics. It has received several awards for aspects of its work, including: Sportsmark Gold, the Football Association Charter Standard for Schools, and Healthy Schools Gold. Also, students have achieved Gold and Silver Awards in the UK mathematics challenge.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistent use of the best teaching evident at the academy, in particular, by:
 - providing clear guidance when marking the students' work on how to improve and not praising work too highly, when it does not deserve to be
 - using questions systematically to identify what the students have learned and to provide challenge for them to improve
 - sticking to the academy's policies for improving the students' literacy skills
 - identifying more opportunities for improving the students' numeracy skills in a range of subjects
 - insisting on high standards for the presentation of students' work
 - increasing the students' engagement in lessons by providing more opportunities for them to ask questions about the aspects of learning that interest them and to be involved in deciding what should be learned about and how.
- Increase the attendance of students in the main academy and in the sixth form.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- In the first-ever Year 11 results for the academy, the achievement was well-above average overall and above average in English and mathematics. Students from different ethnic backgrounds made similar progress to others. The academy's data for the current year show that students are making better progress than last year.
- The attainment of students on entry to the sixth form is below the average for sixth forms. The students make good progress and their examinations results in 2012 were broadly average.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make similar progress to other students at the academy. Additional support provided to students with low levels of reading skills is very successful and results in significant and rapid improvements in reading ability, which the students are able to sustain after the additional support has ended.
- The attainment in English and mathematics of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than for those who are not eligible. As a result, the eligible students' GCSE results are about three-quarters of a grade lower than their peers in English and two-thirds of a grade in mathematics. This group of students does better in both English and mathematics at the academy, however, than similar groups do nationally.
- The students are prepared very well for the next stage of their education or employment. Almost all of the students go on to further education or training after the end of Key Stage 4 and a high proportion of sixth-form students goes on to university courses of their choice, or other suitable options.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is, typically, good and ensures that what the students have learned already is secured and then built upon. It includes the following features:
 - high-quality questioning that probed the students' understanding, prompted them to think more deeply and reinforced the learning
 - a good variety of activities and work set in contexts that were relevant to the students and so captured their interest, including topics that promoted their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development
 - opportunities for the students to learn independently and for them to lead the activities
 - information about how the students' learning was to be assessed and what was needed to reach particular levels and opportunities for them to assess each other, with support to enable them to do so accurately
 - regular assessment and feedback to the students during lessons and marking of their work that offered clear guidance on how to improve.
- The inspectors saw examples of outstanding teaching in both the main academy and the sixth form. In one English lesson, careful questioning ensured that all students engaged with the learning and made rapid gains in their knowledge of the forms of language needed to perform at a high level. In a sixth form media lesson, the teacher pitched questions deftly for each student individually, ascertaining what they had learned and using excellent knowledge of the subject to prompt discussions and push the students to greater levels of understanding.

- In less-effective examples of teaching:
 - lessons were directed too much by the teacher
 - questions were not used systematically to identify and then adapt the lesson to meet the students' learning needs
 - literacy and numeracy skills were not promoted consistently
 - the quality of marking varied and high levels of praise were used when the work did not merit it
 - activities were not sufficiently engaging for all students and resulted in passive behaviour, or inattentiveness
 - students were not encouraged to present work carefully and with pride, resulting in poor presentation.

- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are included well within lessons. The teachers' planning does not always indicate sufficiently clearly, however, how the teaching has been adapted to meet their particular learning needs, rather than simply what outcome might be expected from them.

- Recent work to enable teaching assistants to support students with learning needs better is beginning to have an impact as they are deployed more effectively in lessons. Additional support for students with particular difficulties and who are falling behind with their learning, for example, in reading, are effective and assist the students in making up lost ground quickly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The academy places much emphasis on establishing mutually respectful relationships throughout, reflecting sporting values of teamwork and fair play consistent with the academy's sports specialism. The staff work hard to achieve that and their work is appreciated by the students, who respond well, feel safe, and speak warmly about the academy and the significant efforts made by the staff.

- The students' behaviour in lessons and around the academy is predominantly calm and sensible, even on the narrow lane leading to the academy's gate and the not-much-wider road at the end of the lane, where the students must get off and board school buses.

- Much emphasis is placed on rewarding good behaviour and this contributes to the quality of the relationships evident during the inspection. It has contributed also to significant improvements in behaviour this year compared with last. All of the data on the use of internal sanctions for misbehaviour and for exclusions show marked reductions; the staff and students alike say that behaviour has improved well. Those parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire expressed predominantly positive views about behaviour and about the academy generally.

- There are clear systems for dealing with misbehaviour, which are known and understood by the students, and which are effective in dealing with the small number of instances of bullying or racism that occur. The academy can point to examples of highly personalised approaches for students experiencing significant difficulties in their lives, with notable successes, reintegrating rapidly students who have been unable to participate fully in lessons, or leading to major improvements in attendance.

- Attendance in the main academy is below the national average. It has improved in the current academic year, as a result of a structured approach to tackling absence, but is still below

average. Attendance in the sixth form is lower than that in the main academy.

The leadership and management are good

- The Executive Principal exudes a sense of confidence and pride in the academy that has percolated the staff, which, with the support of other senior leaders, is the foundation of rapid improvements that have been made in the quality of teaching and in the students' behaviour. There is a commitment to openness which ensures that the academy's judgements about the quality of its work are informed by a wide range of relevant evidence, areas for improvement and, occasionally, of inadequate performance, which are identified and tackled.
- There is a carefully structured approach to managing the performance of the staff which ensures that pay progression and enhancements are linked with evidence gathered through the academy's systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and the achievement of the students. There are effective arrangements for the professional development of the staff through a variety of means, such as networks and partnerships with other schools, including a teaching school.
- The curriculum has been designed innovatively to enable the academy to respond to the particular needs of the students. It has significant strengths in a varied range of extra-curricular and other activities that are much valued by the students. The activities are numerous and make a strong contribution to the students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, exemplified most effectively, perhaps, by the academy's highly regarded singing choir. They include charitable work, opportunities to take responsibilities in the academy, and community work undertaken by sixth-form students.
- The pupil premium and Year 7 'catch-up' funding are used to support a range of activities and interventions from which the eligible students benefit. The activities include extra-curricular opportunities and the very effective interventions that reduce the differences between some of the students' reading skills and those of their peers. Other actions have resulted in much-improved attendance by students with previously very low levels of attendance.
- The academy's close relationship with the college of further education that is also its sponsor enables it to offer a range of vocational courses to meet the needs and interests of some students. There are effective arrangements in place to ensure good communications between the academy and the college in order to track the students' attendance and achievement on the courses. The arrangements have ensured that students attending the courses are on track to be successful and involvement in the courses has resulted in improved attendance rates and more-positive attitudes to learning.
- The academy has taken a cautious and carefully considered approach to entering students for mathematics GCSE at an earlier time than usual. Early entry is used with a minority of students only, on occasions when the academy has evidence to indicate that it would be of clear benefit to a student. It has, for example, enabled the academy to increase the number of students taking mathematics courses at a higher level than GCSE.
- The academy has established a productive relationship with the local authority within which it is situated, enabling it to obtain regular external evaluation of its work, which informs the academy's own evaluations.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body and the Trust of which the academy is a part work together to ensure effective scrutiny of and strategic direction for the academy. Together, they have a clear understanding of the students' achievement and the quality of teaching in different subjects and areas of the academy.
- They are well informed, by detailed reports from senior leaders and through their own structures and links with the staff, which enable governors to obtain information about the work of the academy directly. That includes information about the use of the pupil premium and the achievement of the students eligible for it. The governors and the Trust use the information effectively to question and challenge the senior leaders at the academy.
- The governing body is fully involved in establishing the academy's policy for managing the performance of the staff. It draws upon external advice for the performance management of the Executive Principal via the relationship it has established with the local authority.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet current requirements.

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	137112
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	399866

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	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	520
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deborah Giles
Principal	Michael Dennison (Executive Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0115 9110091
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Email address	m.dennison@southnottinghamshireacademy.org

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