

Foxwood Academy

Derby Road, Bramcote, Nottingham, NG9 3GF

Inspection dates 9–10 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.

- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics because teaching is good.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well and get the qualifications required to go on to college when they leave the academy.
- A new and innovative project in partnership with a local hospital enables some sixth form students to develop outstanding work-related skills. They go on to secure full-time paid jobs in the hospital.
- The school manages pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and challenging behaviours well.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils' understanding of how to assess risks and keep themselves safe is good.
- Pupils develop good life skills such as travelling by bus independently and opening and managing a bank account.
- The school's 'Sweet Treats' shop (a retail outlet in the town) enables 11–19 year-old students to develop the skills required in managing a business.
- All leaders, including governors, are meticulous in checking the quality of teaching and provide extensive ongoing training of teachers. This enables the teachers to improve their practice, raises pupils' achievement and supports school improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers do not make enough use of their knowledge of what pupils already know and can do to plan new work for them.
- In a few classes, all pupils do the same work and this does not provide enough challenge for some of them.
- A few teachers spend too much time explaining to pupils what it is they are meant to learn and this slows the progress these pupils make.
- Pupils with moderate learning difficulties, particularly in Key Stage 3, make slower progress in reading than other disability groups throughout the academy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed nine lessons taught by eight different teachers and a teaching assistant. Eight of these lessons were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors heard pupils read from different disability and special educational needs groups. They looked at their written work when observing lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and governors (in their role as trustees as well as in their governance role).
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including assessment and attendance information, pupils' personalised learning plans, the reading scheme, the school's improvement plan, monitoring information, the appraisal policy, all safeguarding documents and minutes of the governing body meetings. Inspectors examined 34 Ofsted questionnaires completed by staff.
- There were 18 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) at the time of the inspection. These views were taken into account by inspectors.

Inspection team

Jeffery Plumb, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rosemary Mackenzie

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Foxwood Academy became an academy school on 1 September 2012. When its predecessor school, Foxwood Foundation School and Technology College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The governing body are the trustees.
- The school makes provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. In addition some pupils have complex medical needs.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Since being launched as an academy there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. They comprise over forty percent of the pupil population.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no Early Years Foundation Stage children on roll. It is planned to admit two such children in September 2013. In the past, the predecessor school admitted Early Years Foundation Stage children.
- The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is slightly above the national average, but the proportion of these pupils from families where English is spoken as an additional language is below the national average. These pupils are represented across all the disability and special educational needs groups in the school.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are supported through the pupil premium (extra funding from the government for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals).
- The school has specialist status for applied learning and technology.
- As part of its specialist status it provides a programme called 'Project SEARCH'. This is run in partnership with Nottingham City Hospital and provides sixth form students (from this school and other schools across the Nottinghamshire and the City of Nottingham) with internships in the hospital. There is a classroom on site for teaching English and mathematics and then students are placed in various jobs throughout the hospital. This is based on an American model. This is part of the academy's alternative provision.
- Other alternative provision includes the 'Sweet Treats Shop' retail outlet in the city for 14–19 year-old students to learn how to run a business, a motor mechanics Level 1 course at Central College Nottingham and an off-site animal care course on a local farm.
- Since being launched as an academy, there have been changes to the senior leadership team.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in all classes by ensuring that:
 - all teachers make effective use of what pupils already know and can do to plan work at the correct level to move them on rapidly with new learning
 - pupils do not spend too long working at tasks they have fully grasped but that they are challenged by different activities so as speed up their learning
 - teachers do not take too long to explain to pupils what they are expected to do in lessons and so sustain a good pace of learning at all times.
- Improve the leadership and management of the academy's reading scheme, particularly so as to raise the achievement for pupils with moderate learning difficulties in Key Stage 3, by ensuring that:

- all teachers are trained and supported in the teaching of the reading scheme, particularly in helping pupils to sound out new words they discover when reading a book
- there are enough quality books in each classroom and the academy’s library for pupils to read and enjoy.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Measured from their various starting points, students in the sixth form make good progress in English and mathematics, some gaining Entry Level 1 and others Level 2 qualifications (equivalent to GCSE grade C passes) in these subjects. All succeed in getting sufficient qualifications to go on to college when they leave the academy.
- Sixth form students on the internship programme develop outstanding employability skills. They secure jobs at the end of their course ranging from administrative jobs using computers to working in the hospital laundry.
- Pupils aged 14 to 19 make good progress in developing relevant work-related literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills through the vocational subjects they study. Science makes a good contribution to the development of their numeracy skills.
- Throughout Key Stages 1 to 4, all pupils whatever their disability or special educational needs, make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils with severe learning difficulties read by gazing with their eyes at large picture books and pointing at pictures with their fingers to express their comprehension of the story. The most able pupils with autistic spectrum disorders have the skills to read complex texts fluently. They have the strategies required to read unfamiliar words and know how to find out what they mean.
- Overall, pupils with moderate learning difficulties make good progress in reading, but their rate of progress, particularly in Key Stage 3, is a little slower than that of their peers with different disabilities. Faced with new and challenging words, they are not consistently confident in sounding out those words accurately.
- A raft of innovative approaches enables all pupils to achieve well in writing. The most able pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, who have an anxiety about failing when using a pen, are provided with laptops. This contributes to their good progress in writing. Use of specialist symbol programs on computers enables pupils with severe learning difficulties to develop good writing skills. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties write for a wide range of different purposes with accurate spelling and effective use of punctuation, within their capability.
- Pupils' mathematical development builds step by step on their previous learning and all make good progress. They develop relevant mathematical skills, such as weighing ingredients when cooking, telling the time and measuring out the amount of oil required when servicing the engine of a motor car. The most able pupils grasp the geometry and algebra skills required to be successful in a Level 2 mathematics qualification.
- Life skills, such as travelling independently and safely on a bus and opening and managing a bank account to run the school's retail outlet, are exceptionally well developed.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those from families who speak English as an additional language, make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to speed up the learning of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority. Consequently, these pupils

are supported in overcoming obstacles to their learning and achieve as well as their peers in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is good. There are pockets of outstanding teaching in the primary department and in the sixth form.
- Teaching has improved rapidly in the short space of time since the launch of this academy. This is because of the targeted advice and tailored coaching teachers receive following observations of their lessons by the senior leadership team.
- There is some quite inspirational teaching. Such teaching was observed in a literacy lesson for primary-aged pupils with severe learning difficulties. Each pupil had an identified expected learning outcome planned to speed up learning in reading and writing. Activities were tailored to enable each pupil to be successful in reaching the learning outcomes planned for them. Their progress was outstanding: one pupil anticipated what was going to happen next during the sensory story; another communicated good comprehension of the story using symbols; and yet another began to write independently, forming letters accurately.
- Flexible planning and imaginative approaches to teaching, based on expert subject knowledge, increases the rate of learning for sixth form students. The teaching of vocational subjects is a particular strength.
- Typically, teachers have high expectations and question pupils effectively in a way that deepens their understanding. Relationships in such lessons are outstanding. Consequently, pupils take safe risks because they are not worried about making a mistake. Often, they excel in their learning. This was observed in an English lesson for more-able pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. These pupils wrote powerful poems, expressing their feelings using outstanding examples of figurative speech.
- There is a little inconsistency in the teaching of reading. A few teachers in Key Stage 3 are not consistently secure in their teaching of reading, particularly when working with pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- Occasionally, teachers take a little too long explaining to pupils what they need to do in lessons. In a few lessons, teachers do not use information about what pupils already know and can do to move them on to new learning quickly enough. In such lessons, pupils are insufficiently challenged because they are left for too long working on tasks they have already fully grasped. This slows their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy learning. Teachers are adept at removing obstacles that interfere with pupils' learning. For example, they sit pupils with autistic spectrum disorders away from areas in the classroom that are likely to cause them to be distracted. When these pupils wander off task, staff skilfully and speedily re-engage them with learning.
- Similarly, teachers position pupils with severe learning difficulties comfortably, when required, using specially adapted chairs so that they are able to reach the equipment they need to learn. Consequently, these pupils engage enthusiastically with the challenging and interesting activities

they are given.

- Sixth form students have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning because of the relevance of the vocational courses they follow and the wide range of work placements they experience.
- Behaviour is good. Older pupils care for younger pupils with sensitivity. They understand with maturity that some pupils can, as they say, 'Occasionally be aggressive due to the nature of their disability'. However, they recognise that, as their teachers help these pupils to communicate, they become less frustrated and their behaviour improves.
- Incidents of bullying, including racist incidents, are rare. Such incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils' knowledge of how bullying can occur using text messages and social network sites is good. They know exactly what to do should they fall victim to this type of bullying. Equally, they are aware of prejudiced-based bullying and have zero tolerance of any bullying linked to disability.
- Pupils who speak using words say that they feel safe. They have an adult within the academy they trust and can talk with about anything that bothers them. Pupils with the most complex needs indicate through gesture and using pictures who they want to support them with their personal care.
- Pupils are skilled at assessing risk for themselves. They know that they must wear a helmet when riding a 'bike' and that they must not run along the side of the swimming pool. Older pupils know how to handle tools safely when working in a garage or on a farm. Their understanding of how to keep themselves safe while using a computer is outstanding.
- Attendance is average and improving. It has risen year-on-year over the past three years. Absence is mostly related to off-site visits to specialist clinics or lengthy stays in hospital.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has been relentless and highly effective in his drive to improve teaching. In the short space of time since the academy was launched, the very small amount of inadequate teaching that existed at the beginning of the current school year has been eradicated.
- Targeted and tailored training is provided to develop individual teachers. Teachers respond well to the courses they attend and the coaching they receive within the academy. For example, the academy's observations identified that a few teachers could better redirect pupils with autistic spectrum disorders when they wandered away from their work, improve their attention span and better their communication skills. They received training in a specialist singing technique and implemented what they learnt in their classes. The attention span and communication skills of the pupils in their classes have improved.
- Through the detailed analysis of its work, the academy has an accurate picture of what it does well and where it needs to improve further. It uses this analysis to improve. For example, analysis of pupils' achievement in mathematics in the secondary department revealed that it could be better. A new mathematics course was launched and a more flexible approach of moving pupils into different mathematics classes was introduced. Pupils' achievement in mathematics in the secondary department has improved significantly as a result.
- Overall, the leadership and management of key stages, subjects and specific and tailored work-

related schemes are good. The management of the 14–19 highly personalised routes of learning and specialist sixth form provision are very good, enabling students to progress directly into paid employment on leaving the academy.

- The leadership of reading lags a little behind that of the other subjects and programmes. There are insufficient quality books in a few classes and in the library for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. A few teachers remain insufficiently confident in knowing exactly how to teach pupils to sound out unfamiliar words and require more training to support them in this aspect of their teaching.
- The academy meets what is required of it as a specialist status school. Pupils from other schools across the Nottinghamshire and the City of Nottingham benefit from working in the academy's 'Sweet Treats' shop where they develop good business management skills. Similarly, sixth form students from other schools participate in the internship scheme at a local hospital, develop outstanding employability skills, and get jobs at the end of their time on the scheme.
- Leaders ensure that different groups of pupils receive equal chances to succeed and rigorously tackle any discrimination. Very occasionally, however, opportunities are missed to get the very best reading from a few pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- Good work is done with parents. Parents of younger pupils are supported through symbol cards to help their children improve their sleeping patterns and bathroom routines. As a new academy, leaders recognise that there is scope for improving communication with parents, and there is a decisive action plan to achieve just that.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' deep reflection on children worse off than themselves has led them to initiating a sponsored walk to raise funds for the treatment of some very sick children. Celebration of Islamic and Hindu festivals within the academy, visits to a mosque and trips overseas, along with learning to speak French, successfully raise pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.
- A positive and constructive relationship has been maintained with the local authority. Support from the local authority is very light touch, but the academy finds it nonetheless useful.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- As trustees, the governors provide valuable support to the academy. The governing body challenges and supports senior leaders. Governors have a wide range of relevant skills and so are equipped to fulfil their statutory duties. They have a good knowledge of how well each of the disability groups within the academy achieve because the headteacher shares pupils' progress data with them regularly. Governors also visit classes frequently to see with their own eyes what is going on. They attend regular training courses to help them manage required change. Actively involved in the total work and life of the academy, governors have their finger on the pulse. They know what is working well and what requires 'notching up a gear'. They ask probing questions of the headteacher on a frequent basis. Then they support the headteacher in making the improvements required. They know where the pupil premium funding is targeted and regularly receive reports on the impact of this funding. They have a sharp focus on raising pupils' achievement because, as the Chair of the Governing Body says, 'These children have the one life chance.' Governors ensure that a robust policy links teachers' performance to pay, based on how well they promote pupils' learning. They know about any underperformance in teaching and take decisive action, in partnership with the headteacher, to address it. The headteacher's performance is reviewed in accordance with regulations. Governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met.

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	138661
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	409386

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

Type of school	Academy special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Taylor
Headteacher	Chris Humphreys
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0115 9177202
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