

The Heathfield Academy

Belle Vue Road, Earl Shilton, Leicester, LE9 7PA

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2013

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' achievement is outstanding. They join Year 7 with levels of attainment that are typical for students of their age. By the end of Year 9, their attainment is well above average, and often in the top few per cent of students nationally.
- Students progress rapidly in Years 7 to 9. The progress of disabled students, those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is just as good as that of other students.
- Students who are supported by additional government funding make outstanding progress so that they achieve almost as well as their classmates, especially in English and Mathematics, because of the well targeted additional support in these subjects.
- This funding is also used very well to support these students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, by widening the range of their experiences.
- An excellent range of subjects and activities reflects the academy's commitment to meeting all students' needs and aspirations. A wide range of out-of-school activities extends students' experiences, and strongly supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Nearly half of all teaching is outstanding, and the very large majority is at least good. Staff are experts within their subjects and at gaining students' interests and involvement in lessons. Students enjoy lessons very much, and staff enjoy working with them.
- Students' attitudes to learning are outstanding in lessons. They are courteous and considerate to one another and to adults in the academy.
- Students feel very safe and say they are looked after very well in the academy.
- All aspects of the academy's work are monitored carefully by leaders to make sure that students are achieving as much as they can and no one is falling behind.
- Leaders, including governors, have excellent systems in place to hold teachers and others to account for students' progress and to ensure teaching improves even more.
- Governors work very closely with senior leaders, subject coordinators and those responsible for students' wellbeing. As a result, they support the academy extremely well, using their own skills and this first-hand knowledge highly effectively to contribute to the academy's development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a total of 24 lessons, and all teachers who were available in the academy during the inspection were seen. Inspectors also saw some smaller groups in which students were being supported, and heard students read. Five observations were conducted jointly with leaders.
- Inspectors looked at data on students' progress provided by the academy, which compared students' attainment and progress with national data.
- Inspectors examined students' work in books during lessons, and also looked at work in a wide range of subjects gathered together by the academy.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and senior leaders, with subject leaders and those responsible for looking after students' wellbeing.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to enable an analysis of parents' view to be made, but inspectors took account of the responses to the academy's own surveys of parental views.
- Inspectors looked at key documentation provided by the academy, including its self-evaluation and policies, minutes of meetings, records of attendance and behaviour, and data relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Davd Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Martin

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Needham

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized school.
- The Heathfield Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 July 2012. When its predecessor school, Heathfield High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The great majority of students are of White British heritage, and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. This is additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average, as is the proportion of those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Students are not taught away from the main school site.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Give students a better understanding of how they can improve their work and do so, by
 - giving them even more opportunities to assess and learn from one another's work
 - ensuring that teachers require students to respond to their comments in students' books about how to improve their work and that they check that students' subsequent work takes account of these.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- When they join the academy, students' attainment is typical for their age. It is higher in mathematics and science than in English. Students read well, and their skills support them well in understanding the more advanced work of the academy.
- As a result of excellent teaching, the number of students who reach National Curriculum Level 6 in English, mathematics and science is well above average. They do particularly well in English and science, where the trend is rising year on year, and is sometimes in the top 2% of schools nationally.
- The progress that students make compares favourably with the national picture, with 84% of students reaching Level 5 or above in English and mathematics at the end of Year 9. In English, mathematics and science, the proportion making better than the expected progress is above average for all students and often considerably above. This is true for all groups of students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- The academy collects data about the progress of all students in all subjects throughout the year. This data shows that the excellent progress that they make in English and mathematics is reflected in other curriculum areas.
- The academy makes excellent use of data from primary schools, and from its own testing, in order to allocate the catch-up funds for students whose reading skills are in danger of becoming a barrier to learning in Year 7. Excellent support enables them to read as well as their peers and to progress in all subjects.
- Those eligible for support through the pupil premium benefit greatly from lessons on their own or in small groups, and progress extremely well. Typically, these students are working at a level about four to six months behind their peers in English and mathematics. Data shows that the gap between this group and others is narrowing, because of this very well targeted support.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- In the lessons seen by inspectors, the great majority of teaching was judged to be at least good. In almost half of the lessons, the teaching was outstanding. Teachers are highly skilled in communicating to students what they are to learn during the lesson, and constantly check to make sure that they are learning as well as possible.
- The academy prides itself on its use of specialist subject teachers, and excellent subject knowledge, questioning skills and excellent relationships were consistently seen in lessons and ensure students develop their own skills and understandings in subjects very well indeed.
- Lessons are carefully planned so that students understand how their learning is progressing. Transitions between the different parts of the lesson are organised particularly well. In an outstanding lesson on track events, for example, discussion about what students were to learn had already started in the changing room, with key words and challenges given in advance. Students participated actively, and with a strong sense of enjoyment.
- Excellent use is made of support staff, who are very well briefed so that they can help to remove

barriers to learning. The work is generally very well matched to the needs of students of all abilities, though, just occasionally, in weaker lessons, it is not challenging enough for the most able or opportunities are missed for students to learn from each other.

- Teachers give students challenging goals to strive for and understand their own progress, often linked to how to improve to a particular National Curriculum level. In a lesson about the movement of the Earth around the sun, the teacher used the development of scientific ideas extremely well to help students to think as scientists do, and to work at the highest levels.
- An emphasis on creativity and on students thinking for themselves is an important element in many lessons. In an excellent art lesson, for example, students used recycled materials highly creatively to produce their own robots, and evaluated one another's work sensitively, reviewing carefully and constructively the strengths of each design and how it might be improved.
- Practical work plays an important part in enabling the learning to be so strong in subjects such as mathematics and science. When making a model of sedimentary rock, very clear instructions meant that every student knew exactly what to do. Very good attention to techniques meant that the outcomes showed the structure of these rocks very well indeed.
- Some very effective use of self- and peer-assessment was seen in lessons, including some excellent practice in physical education lessons in which the outcomes from assessment were used to direct the next part of the lesson. However, opportunities are missed in some lessons for students to learn from each others' ideas through sharing and assessing one another's ideas and work.
- Marking is regular and very helpful, and much appreciated by students, who use comments made by teachers to track their own progress in their planners. However, not all students act upon the very helpful comments that teachers provide and this is not always checked on by teachers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' attitudes in lessons are exemplary, and contribute greatly to the harmonious atmosphere and excellent learning that takes place. They are unfailingly punctual to lessons, and are ready to work promptly. They contribute with interest to discussions and are not afraid to ask for help when they need it.
 - Around the academy, students show respect and courtesy towards their peers and for the adults they work with, including non-teaching staff. They are proud of their school, and reflect this in their manners and conduct. Just occasionally, students show immature behaviour in corridors when they are unsupervised between lessons.
 - The academy tracks behaviour well, and intervenes quickly to support those students who find it difficult to conform to the academy's very high standards. Support for the most vulnerable students is highly effective because the academy makes good use of its own resources and of the professional help available from support agencies.
 - The academy provides excellent pastoral support, including anger management and development of social skills. This helps students who do have any emotional or behavioural challenges to manage these very well and contributes to all students' excellent social and moral development. There have been no permanent exclusions in the recent past, and fixed-term
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exclusions are rare. If this does happen students are well supported while at home, through work being set and then a carefully thought out return to school programme.

- The academy has effective procedures in place to encourage students to attend regularly. Students' attendance is in line with that of similar age groups nationally. Persistent absence is low, and there is positive recognition for good or improved attendance, as well as firm action in cases where attendance is poor.
- Students feel very safe and say that bullying is rare. The academy's documentation shows that students are right to say that if incidents do happen they are swiftly and sensitively dealt with. The academy is committed to the principles of equal opportunity, and tackles racist incidents firmly.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Central to the work of the academy is a very strong commitment to the welfare, safety and progress of its students. Governors, staff, students and parents are hugely committed to this vision and work together in an environment in which everyone's contribution is highly valued.
- Detailed monitoring and evaluation are key to the school's success. This is reflected in the outstanding progress made by students, which puts them consistently in the top 10% of students nationally, and sometimes in the top 2%.
- Senior managers carefully monitor teaching as part of performance management, and subject leaders play a major part in identifying how teaching could be improved. Timetabled visits to lessons, and discussions with subject leaders by link governors, ensure that the governing body has first-hand experience of the work of the school.
- Monitoring of teaching is regular and robust, and is used to identify where further professional development is needed. Teachers are given good opportunities to undertake professional development, and records show that the drive for further improvement is being effective. Any underperformance is rigorously tackled.
- Pastoral and subject leaders are proud to be part of the management of an outstanding academy and fulfil their responsibilities very well. Staff at all levels are extremely positive about all aspects of the academy and the ways in which they feel valued and able to contribute. Teachers and support staff, work very well together to ensure that students' personal development equips them very well for life when they leave school.
- Parents are delighted to be able to contribute to the progress of the academy through regular surveys. Although few parents responded to the request to complete Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, the academy's own surveys use the same questions and show a very high level of parental satisfaction.
- The curriculum covers the needs and aspirations of students exceptionally well. A diverse programme of extra-curricular clubs and activities complements what is taught in lessons, and is greatly valued by students, including the opportunities for visits and to undertake residential visits in Britain and abroad. The academy makes excellent use of some of its funding from the pupil premium to give eligible students opportunities that they might not otherwise have and this promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- The governors, headteacher and senior staff work exceptionally well together to communicate a consistent vision for the academy, which is well placed to improve even further on the high levels of academic progress and personal development enjoyed by its students.

- **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is fully committed to the academy's success, and makes excellent use of the variety of professional expertise available to it. Governors understand very well their responsibilities and make excellent use of appropriate training, data and the academy's own monitoring information to fulfil these. The system of link governors having regular meetings with departments is greatly welcomed by departmental leaders, who feel that they have a voice within the governing body. Visits to lessons give governors first-hand knowledge of the work of the academy. Governors ensure that the performance of staff is managed effectively, is related to pupil progress and is reflected in their remuneration. They make sure that the finances available to the academy are deployed effectively, including the pupil premium and how its use is improving outcomes for pupils. They have ensured that all statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding are met.
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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	138327
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	409376

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	394
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Walker
Headteacher	Graham Jones
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01455 842149
Fax number	01455 840535
Email address	office@heathfield.leics.sch.uk;

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