

# Sheffield Park Academy

Beaumont Road North, Sheffield, S2 1SN

**Inspection dates** 4–5 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 academy has improved significantly since the previous inspection because of intelligent leadership, influential governance and the creation of a clear vision for improvement which staff and students have embraced. This has resulted in students' achievement, the quality of teaching and their behaviour and safety all moving from satisfactory to good.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- The academy has developed a positive climate for learning with good relationships between staff and students and among different groups of students.
- Key areas for improvement highlighted at the previous inspection have been well-tackled. For example, there has been a huge improvement in students' attendance.
- The latest academic tracking data indicate that the rising trend in students' attainments and achievements apparent over the past three years is set to continue.
- The academy has developed a number of highly effective partnerships which are supporting its improvement.
- Students with special educational needs and those who are supported by the pupil premium make particularly good progress.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of the sixth form requires significant improvement to be good. While recent developments are stimulating some improvements, the impact of leadership, teaching and the curriculum over time are requiring improvement rather than being good overall. This is indicated by the variations in the achievements, attainments and course completion (retention) figures for students following different types of courses.
- In the main academy further modifications are necessary, for example in the quality and consistency of teaching in the academy, especially for the more-able.
- The academy remains on a journey towards being an outstanding provider of education. It has taken great strides since the previous inspection and has improved substantially. But it is not there yet which is exemplified by the aspects requiring further improvement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons taught by 36 teachers in 15 different subjects at the academy. Nine of the 36 lessons seen were joint lesson observations with the academy's senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to students read, evaluated the quality of the work in a range of students' books and visited different areas of the school site, including the support base, which provides for students who are internally excluded because of their behaviour, and the academy's library provision. Inspectors also sampled several tutorial sessions and saw staff delivering sessions to develop and improve students' literacy skills.
- Meetings or discussions were held with four governors, two representatives from the academy's sponsor, the headteacher and a number of senior and middle leaders such as heads of subjects, the assistant principal with responsibility for the sixth form and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also spoke to three different groups of students.
- Inspectors analysed the school's own student questionnaires and evaluated questionnaire responses from 38 academy staff. There were not enough responses available on the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for the lead inspector to access.
- The inspection team examined a range of school documentation including: safeguarding and child protection arrangements; improvement strategies; records of lesson monitoring and checks on students' learning and progress; and the minutes of meetings, including those of the governing body. Inspectors also looked at records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- The inspectors considered the academy's arrangements for making best use of the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, those whose parents are in the armed forces and students known to be eligible for free school meals.

## Inspection team

John Young, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Robin Fugill

Additional Inspector

Eleanor Garbutt

Additional Inspector

Timothy Gartside

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Sheffield Park Academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school with a sixth form. It converted to become an academy on 1 September 2006. It is sponsored by United Learning.
- Students at the academy originate from a range of ethnic heritages. The largest groups are White British, Bangladeshi and Pakistani. There are a growing number of Eastern European students. The proportion of students who are believed to speak English as an additional language is well above the national average for secondary schools.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is higher than in most schools nationally. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is lower than average. Their needs range from speech, language and communication needs, hearing impairment and physical disability to autistic spectrum disorder and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- Nine Year 10 and Year 11 students attend alternative provision at a range of local providers including: ReCycle, In2Change, Sheffield Vocational Consortium, Sprint Training, and Education through Angling, Sheffield College, Sheffield Wednesday Study Support, Red Tape Studios, Heeley City Farm and Starworks Mechanics. They offer accredited courses such as motor vehicle maintenance, hair and beauty, construction and social and emotional development. Students attend these courses twice a week and are taught in the main school the rest of the time.
- The academy provides extended services such as study support and community access to its facilities. The academy is also engaged in some family support services and run a breakfast club.
- The academy meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 4.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the effectiveness of teaching on students' learning so that it is consistently outstanding by the time of the next inspection for all groups of students in the academy by:
  - stamping out the minority of poor and run-of-the-mill teaching that exists and establishing the most effective teaching and learning strategies in the academy as the norm in each classroom
  - ensuring all middle leaders are suitably equipped to effectively monitor, evaluate and promote improvements in the quality and consistency of teaching in their curriculum areas.
- Ensure all groups of students' achievement is outstanding by:
  - improving all students' progress, especially those that are not yet making consistently good or outstanding progress, such as the most-able students
  - further raising students' attainment in those subjects where standards are not high when compared with national averages, such as mathematics, English and history.
- Urgently, improve the overall effectiveness of the sixth form by:
  - taking steps to ensure the quality of A-level teaching improves substantially and that students make the same good and outstanding progress made by students taking BTEC courses
  - reviewing the appropriateness of existing curriculum arrangements and making certain that students are always well-matched to courses that meet their needs, interests and aspirations
  - significantly improve the retention rates of students taking A-level subjects so that they match the high levels achieved by students on the BTEC courses.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most students' achievement in the main academy is at least good when set against their starting points. For example, the numbers exceeding expected levels of progress in English was 51% in 2012 compared with a national average of 28%. Also, the percentage of students gaining five A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics is rising at a much faster rate than nationally over a sustained period. This is the case for almost all of the groups in the academy including minority ethnic students, those who attract pupil premium funding, disabled students and those with special educational needs. Students achieve particularly highly on BTEC courses.
- The progress of students accessing alternative provision is closely monitored and they achieve well, including gaining suitable English, mathematics and science qualifications in addition to work-related and personal development awards.
- Students are entered early for mathematics in Year 10 and usually attain or exceed their target grade. Those that do not gain the highest grades are re-entered in Year 11 to try and do so.
- Students read effectively and regularly. The academy is very successful at boosting the reading ages and literacy skills of less-able students and those at the early stages of learning English.
- Students' achievement is not yet outstanding because there remain variations in the performance of some groups of students and subjects. For example, the achievements of the small number of most-able students in the academy are not consistently good in either mathematics or English. Similarly, humanities subjects such as history have not provided good value for money over time and students' progress has been slow. The academy's leaders accept that they must further improve the effectiveness of their strategies to raise attainment so that all students make exceptional progress in all subjects and attain the highest grades, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and high entry subjects like history.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement to be good overall. While students achieve very well on BTEC courses and have done so over time, the opposite is true for the minority of students taking A-level courses. Students' attainment when set against national averages is low for A-level and high for BTEC courses. The academy's leaders accept that as a matter of urgency this state of affairs must be tackled and improved so that all students achieve well and attain highly irrespective of the courses they follow. Nevertheless, more than half of students went on to university in 2012, while the remainder went into apprenticeships, further education or employment. The latest tracking data indicate an improvement in A-level outcomes for 2013.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- The majority of teaching is good with elements that are outstanding, which is reflected in the good and better progress that most students make.
- Staff are enthusiastic, have good subject knowledge and have embraced the opportunities given to them to hone their teaching skills and increase their effectiveness.
- Typically, lessons are well-structured with clear success criteria and targeted questioning to ensure the participation of all students. Expectations are high and good relationships between students and staff encourage a positive climate for learning. Teachers have a good grasp of students' abilities and give them progressively challenging work and effective support that allows them to make big gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills across a range of subjects.
- Effective support for students known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, disabled students and those with special educational needs, minority ethnic students and students with low literacy levels has allowed them to make faster progress and reach higher standards than their peers in other schools. However, the most-able students do not make the same very fast progress.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because variations remain and the contrast between the strongest and weakest teaching is striking. There are some outstanding teachers who are able to capture students' imaginations and enable them to make exceptional progress. The academy

acknowledges that there is more work to do to make this the case in every classroom.

- Marking and feedback are mostly sound, giving students praise and guidance on how to improve, and correcting their misconceptions. Students know how well they are doing relative to their targets.
- Leaders know that to improve teaching further, all middle leaders must effectively monitor, evaluate and promote improvements in the quality and consistency of teaching in their curriculum areas, which is not the case at present.
- Teaching in the sixth form requires improvement to be good. This is reflected in students' variable achievements in A-level and BTEC courses over time, and the mix of good and less effective teaching that was seen during the inspection. Leaders recognise that urgent action is needed to: improve the quality of A-level teaching; ensure students are always placed on the right courses for them; and increase retention rates. Students benefit from a range of additional activities which aid their personal development such as: work experience; mentoring younger pupils; doing voluntary work in the community; and representing the academy in competitions.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The academy is a calm and orderly place with a supportive and caring ethos. Most students, including the various groups of minority ethnic students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and at social times. There are few reported incidents of racial taunting, homophobic- or cyber-bullying.
- Students, including those deemed more vulnerable, say they feel safe in the academy. Clear behaviour management procedures exist which staff apply consistently and most students follow. The behaviour support team has won the trust of students and built good working links with support agencies, different community groups and parents and carers. This helps it to 'nip in the bud' any rising tensions or conflicts before they escalate. The academy's good work in curbing the behaviour of students with particular social and emotional needs is reflected in the big decline in levels of permanent and fixed-term exclusions, and referrals to the support base.
- Students are aware of the potential risks they face and know how to keep themselves and others safe. They are confident that if they had an issue staff would help them to resolve it.
- Students' attendance has risen considerably since the previous inspection and there has been a similarly impressive reduction in rates of persistent absence. Students' punctuality is good.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because there remain aspects that although improving are not yet good or better such as attendance and some students' behaviour.
- Behaviour and safety are good in the sixth form. Students are mature and respectful of each other. Good welfare systems exist to support them and attendance has improved over time.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The capable and astute headteacher is well supported by several effective senior leaders. The clear directions they have given, coupled with the effective actions they have taken over time have led to significant improvements in the quality of education the academy provides.
- Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the academy's work, especially the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum in the main school, through training, mentoring and challenging underperformance, have helped raise standards and improve efficiency.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and all aspects of the academy's work are regularly monitored and evaluated to identify changes needed. Leaders' ability to increase the academy's effectiveness from satisfactory to good since the previous inspection demonstrates their impact.
- Leaders have developed a series of partnerships with outstanding schools such as Notre Dame, and Silverdale in Sheffield and Wickersley in Rotherham to raise standards, improve the quality of teaching and better support student and staff development. Together with the educational consultants used and some high quality appointments, these alliances are proving productive.

- Staff support the academy's vision for improvement and know the part they have to play. The academy has strengthened relations with parents and carers by keeping them better informed about their child's progress, what is happening in the academy and hosting and inviting them to community and celebration events, which are increasingly well-attended.
- Procedures for performance management are rigorous. There is evidence that leaders reward the most effective staff and hold to account those who are underperforming. On occasion, this has included preventing staff from getting a pay rise and/or capability procedures.
- The curriculum meets the needs and interests of students, who receive a mix of traditional, business and enterprise and more practically based courses. This is enhanced by a range of visits and visitors and opportunities designed to increase students' awareness of life beyond Sheffield, raise their aspirations and increase their independence and self-esteem. They talked animatedly about their roles in performing arts events. They value the study support and enjoy raising funds for charity. Students proudly serve as school council members, ambassadors and sports leaders. These experiences promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Underpinning this strong curriculum is the care, guidance and support students receive which is helping them to flourish, including those deemed more vulnerable than others.
- Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to promote the targeted students' academic progress; personal development; provide wider curriculum experiences; and support parents and carers to better help their children to succeed. As a result, the gaps between these students' academic standards and other students in the academy have closed considerably and they are performing well beyond the levels of progress expected of them. Behaviour and attendance have improved dramatically and parents and carers are being provided with study support resources.
- Provision for the small numbers of students who access off-site alternative provision is effective and enables them to gain a range of externally accredited qualifications and awards.
- Safeguarding and child protection procedures are first-rate and systems for the safe recruitment of staff, assessing risk and site security are robust. Designated staff are well-trained and vigilant.
- Leadership of the sixth form requires improvement to be good. Recent changes in leadership are demonstrating a more effective approach but have had insufficient time to fully impose itself. Key changes are being implemented to improve the effectiveness of assessment and monitoring, curriculum, teaching, and student welfare arrangements. These are showing some initial signs of success. However, leaders realise that a thorough review and transformation of A-level provision is required to effect the consistently good and better outcomes evident for BTEC courses.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The sponsors are exerting an effective influence on the academy's development. By keeping a strategic overview and facilitating access to the expertise and experiences of outstanding schools within the United Learning group, the academy's development has been accelerated.
  - On a day-to-day basis the local governing body exercises its duty to monitor, support and challenge the academy to improve effectively. Governors have a range of expertise in key areas of the academy's work such as safeguarding, analysis of performance data, human resource management and education which enable them to critically evaluate the academy's relative performance against key performance indicators.
  - The minutes of their meetings show that governors ask searching questions and hold the senior and middle leaders to account for the academy's performance. Frequent visits to the academy, their experience and sound induction and updated training mean that governors know the academy well, and meet their statutory responsibilities effectively. They discussed the quality of teaching, the impact of pupil premium funding and the links between performance management and staff salary progression or promotion with inspectors confidently.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131895
<b>Local authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	400142

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	940
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	104
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Hudson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Craig Dillon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 239 2661
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<b>Email address</b>	info@sheffield-academy.org



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