

Queen Elizabeth's Academy

Chesterfield Road South, Mansfield, NG19 7AP

Inspection dates

9–10 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement in English and mathematics is inadequate. Too few students make the progress they should and so many others fail to reach the standards they are capable of by the end of Key Stage 4.
- Teaching is inadequate, particularly in English and mathematics. There is not enough good or outstanding teaching, to reverse students' past underachievement.
- Many teachers do not use what they know about students' prior learning to plan lessons that match their needs.
- Students' attitudes to learning are not consistently good.
- Attendance is low. It has been stubbornly below the national average since the academy opened.
- Despite actions taken by senior leaders and governors to improve the quality of teaching and the progress students make, achievement and the quality of teaching are not improving quickly enough.
- Academy leaders have an over-generous view of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Improvement plans are unrealistic and do not set clear milestones by which governors can monitor the pace of improvement.
- The sixth form requires improvement, both in the quality of provision and achievement of students.

The school has the following strengths

- The Principal has ably challenged the previous culture of low expectations.
- The vast majority of staff support the Principal's commitment to raising standards and improving outcomes for students.
- The number of temporary exclusions has fallen significantly since the academy opened.
- The proportion of students who are persistently absent from the academy has reduced.
- Students are proud of their academy and generally behave sensibly with support from adults.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons including three joint lesson observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Principal and vice-Principal, other senior and middle leaders, and with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. The lead inspector also spoke with representatives from the academy's sponsor.
- Inspectors spoke with four groups of students in meetings as well as at other times, informally in lessons and around the academy.
- Inspectors reviewed a variety of documents, including the academy's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and the academy improvement plan. In addition, they looked at attendance and behaviour records, minutes from governing body meetings, subject reviews, and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors were unable to review responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, as there were not enough registered before the end of the inspection.

Inspection team

Philippa Darley, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nada Trikid	Her Majesty's Inspector
Denah Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector
Michael Hiscox	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Queen Elizabeth's Academy is a much smaller-than-average secondary school. It became an academy in January 2012 and is sponsored by the School Partnership Trust Academies and maintains a link to the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham.
- The proportion of students who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional school funding for particular groups, which in this academy applies to students who are known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than that found nationally as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The majority of students are White British with a significant proportion from other white backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- At the time of the inspection, the academy did not make use of any alternative, or off-site provision.
- The academy is part of the Mansfield Learning Partnership, a group of secondary schools who collaborate together to provide a broad range of post-16 opportunities across the area.
- In 2012, the academy met the government's floor standard for achievement at the end of Key Stage 4.
- The Principal has been in post since April 2012. A new Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed this term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eradicate variations in students' achievement in English and mathematics by robustly improving the weakest teaching in these subjects.
- Improve the consistency of teaching so that all lessons secure at least good progress for all groups of students and encourage them to develop good attitudes to learning by:
 - making sure that all teachers use all the information they have about their students' previous learning to plan lessons and activities that will meet their needs
 - increasing the opportunities for students to think and find things out for themselves in lessons
 - giving students more chances to develop, apply and reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects.
- Rapidly improve the attendance of all students across the academy, so that it is at least in line with the national average.
- Improve the achievement of those students in the sixth form who are undertaking academic qualifications and increase the opportunities all students have to develop their employability skills.
- Strengthen the capacity of leadership and management at all levels to sustain improvement by:
 - developing the skills of subject leaders so that they take full responsibility for improving the quality of teaching in their departments
 - strengthening the analysis of information about students' progress in English and mathematics to support leaders and governors in checking on how well different groups of students are doing across all year groups
 - making the quality of academy self-evaluation and planning more accurate and realistic, so that there is a much clearer picture of the actions and milestones required in order for the academy to be judged good by July 2015.

Ofsted will make recommendations for action on governance to the authority responsible for the academy. An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the academy's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because students do not make the progress they should in English and mathematics.
- While the attainment of students on entry to the academy is lower than is found nationally, in July 2013 students left the academy with results much lower than could be reasonably expected given their starting points. Provisional data show that just 34% of these students achieved five GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics. This, combined with the information on the progress they made since joining the academy, demonstrates that the academy failed to meet the government's 2012 current floor standard in 2013. This represents a decline in standards from the previous year.
- The progress of current students in English and mathematics is improving, but slowly. Due to deficiencies in the quality of teaching, students are still not making enough progress in these subjects. Progress is not consistent enough. Consequently, from one year group to the next, students make poor progress in one or other of these subjects.
- The progress that lower-ability students make in mathematics across Key Stage 3 is about a term less than their peers each year. Over time, they are not developing the skills they need to successfully begin studying at GCSE level.
- The progress made by students for whom the academy receives pupil premium funding is inadequate. In 2013, less than one in four of these students made the progress they should have done in English by the end of Key Stage 4. This picture was slightly better in mathematics with about one in three making the progress expected nationally by the end of the key stage. Academy data show that progress for current Year 11 students eligible for the pupil premium funding has improved in mathematics but not in English.
- Despite recent improvements to the provision and support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, these students make inadequate progress overall. Two thirds of these students are failing to achieve their targets in English and mathematics.
- The achievement of those students who are not White British and who speak English as an additional language improved significantly in 2013. The standards they reached by the end of Key Stage 4 were higher than those of other students in the year group. They made particularly good progress in mathematics. This was a direct result of specialist teaching support provided by the academy for these students.
- The academy has adopted a policy of entering students early for GCSE English and mathematics. As a result, more-able students have not had the opportunity to extend their learning in these subjects and too few of them have achieved the higher, A or A*, grades. This practice is preventing these students from developing the understanding they need to succeed at A level.
- The academy has introduced reading and numeracy intervention programmes to support students entitled to Year 7 catch-up funding. Academy records show that these programmes have had a minimal impact on the progress the majority of these students have made. These students do not have enough carefully planned opportunities to improve their literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects.

- Achievement in other subjects, such as art, product design and vocational BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council) qualifications is consistently strong. Students make good progress and reach standards consistent with national averages in these subjects.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. Attainment in academic subjects remains low. However, it is improving in vocational subjects, particularly in the numbers of students achieving the highest grades. These have more than doubled over the last year.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The quality of teaching is inadequate because too few students make the progress they should over time. There is not enough good teaching, particularly in the key subjects of English and mathematics, to ensure that students make rapid gains in their learning.
- Variability in teaching quality means that students do not receive an equal opportunity of provision. Inadequate teaching is having a significant impact on the progress some groups of students make.
- In many lessons, teachers do not use the information they have to plan work for students of different abilities. They give all students the same work to do and those who are capable of working at a faster pace are unable to do so. In these lessons, teachers are more concerned with students completing tasks rather than making sure they progress in their learning.
- Students, including the more-able students, do not have enough opportunities to think for themselves in lessons. Teachers do not ask enough questions to challenge them or to probe their understanding. In these lessons, students rely too much on the direct intervention of their teacher and are not able to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers do not routinely tackle low standards of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. Inspectors observed some examples of highly effective provision. In these lessons, students' learning needs were carefully analysed and good opportunities for developing literacy enabled them to make rapid gains in their skills and confidence.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs benefit from specifically tailored small-group and one-to-one teaching sessions. However, the progress these students make in lessons is more variable and is dependent on the quality of the support they get from their teacher and other adults.
- When teaching is most effective, teachers carefully plan learning opportunities that challenge all students and encourage them to participate actively in lessons. Students recognise that sometimes they learn best when, 'The teacher doesn't keep stopping us all the time'. They enjoy having the opportunity to collaborate and work things out for themselves. In other lessons, such as in technology, timely interventions are used to model practical skills. These result in students modifying their own methods to achieve better outcomes.
- The new marking and feedback policy is beginning to bring greater consistency in assessment practice across departments. Where it is used most effectively, students know how to improve the quality of their work and are given the time to do so. For example in art, written assessments alongside constant oral feedback have a direct impact on the progress individuals make.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**requires improvement**

- Behaviour in lessons largely depends on the quality of teaching. Students recognise that poor behaviour frequently disrupts some of their lessons. This is having an impact on the progress they make in these classes. Where teaching is good, and the academy's behaviour policy is assiduously applied, students behave well and are motivated to learn. In these lessons, students cooperate respectfully with each other and with adults.
- Adults closely supervise the behaviour of students around the academy, in corridors and during breaks and lunchtime. Students generally behave sensibly, socialise together and are welcoming to visitors. They speak positively about their academy and the actions adults take to ensure they are safe.
- Students report that bullying does occur and they know who to report it to when it happens. A few students report that the academy does not always deal effectively with incidents, particularly racist name-calling. They are fully aware of the different types of bullying, including racist, homophobic and on-line bullying.
- Attendance remains lower than the national average. Academy leaders have rightly identified that they need to work closely with parents in order to reduce the number of term-time holidays that are taken. The appointment of a family-liaison officer and inclusion coordinator has led to a reduction in the persistent absenteeism of some students and is ensuring that all students are safe and educated on site.
- There has been a significant fall in the number of times academy leaders use temporary exclusion as a response to poor behaviour and alternative measures to ensure students behave appropriately are effective. Figures for the last academic year show that these exclusions are now well below those in other secondary schools.

The leadership and management**are inadequate**

- Current leaders and managers have not secured the essential improvements needed to the quality of teaching and to the achievement of students in English and mathematics. Many management systems are new and are not fully effective.
- The Principal has secured an important cultural change in the academy. He is single-minded in his ambition to improve outcomes so that the academy performs in line with the national picture. Because of this, he has systematically challenged underperformance, improved behaviour and significantly reduced the use of temporary exclusions. Staff and students agree that the academy has improved since his appointment.
- The senior leadership team is starting to show promise, but has had limited impact on school improvement. The Principal has built a team that shares his vision and is equally committed to raising achievement across the academy. Senior managers now have an accurate picture of the standards students are reaching in assessments. 'Aiming high' targets are aspirational and set appropriate expectations for teachers. Leaders are reviewing other aspects of the academy's provision, including the curriculum, to ensure it is better matched to the needs of all students.
- Senior leaders and governors have an over-generous view of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. Their analysis of performance data is not exacting enough to highlight the progress groups of students are making over time. Additional interventions, funded through the pupil premium, are not rigorously evaluated and, as a result, leaders are unable to judge the impact

of many of these.

- The academy's improvement plan is not good enough. While highly ambitious and aligned to national expectations, it is not based on a realistic picture of the progress students can make over time.
- There are wide variations in the effectiveness of subject leaders. While some have been successful in establishing high expectations in their subjects, others have not, especially in English and mathematics. Subject leaders are not involved in evaluating the quality of teaching in their departments and this is weakening the capacity for further academy improvement.
- Joint observations of lessons undertaken by inspectors and senior managers show that leaders know what constitutes good teaching. Teachers are now set challenging objectives linked to students' progress and academy priorities. However, professional development has been too general. Leaders are aware of this, and are now in a position to tailor training more closely to the needs identified through lesson observations.
- Leadership of the sixth form requires improvement. The Director of Post-16 Education has introduced new systems for monitoring attendance and has adapted the curriculum to offer more flexible academic and vocational pathways. Leaders have created a relevant study programme, but there are few opportunities for students to develop their employability skills or to experience the world of work.
- The quality of impartial independent advice and guidance is variable. It effectively supports students in Key Stage 4 to choose from the opportunities available to them through the Mansfield Learning Partnership. However, students in the sixth form say they do not have enough information about future employment and apprenticeships.
- Inadequate achievement means that the academy is not able to ensure the equality of opportunity for all groups of students.
- The School Partnership Trust Academies has supported the academy in a variety of ways. It has strengthened governance and provides advice to leaders as they tackle inadequacies in teaching. The academy has been able to access their network of teaching experts. However, there is little evidence of the impact this work has had on the achievement of students.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- The academy's systems for ensuring the safeguarding of students meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body of the academy has recently restructured to become an 'Educational Advisory Board'. This change has come about from a strategic decision to focus more sharply on achievement. A new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body have been appointed this term and a full audit of the skills of governors is planned, but has not yet taken place.
 - Governors are limited in the challenge they can provide to academy leaders because the information they receive has not enabled them to understand clearly the weaknesses in achievement. Academy improvement planning lacks milestones by which governors can hold leaders to account.
 - Governors have received regular information about the quality of teaching from senior leaders. Consequently, they have made informed decisions about pay based on the progress students are making. They have also rewarded good teaching through the establishment of 'Lead

Teachers' and have supported two members of staff in achieving Advanced Skills Teacher status.

- Governors have been actively involved in determining how to spend pupil premium funding. They know this has had a positive impact when it has been used to pay for additional staff with specific responsibilities. For example, an outreach worker is working closely with families to improve the attendance of individual students. However, governors are aware that they need to do more to evaluate the impact of the funding more widely, and an external review of governance should be undertaken to enable the quality of governance to be improved.

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	137749
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	399888

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	680
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pam Bishop
Headteacher	Mike Smith
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01623 623559
Fax number	01623 410510
Email address	info@qeacademy.org.uk

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