

Nottingham University Samworth Academy

Bramhall Road, Bilborough, Nottingham, NG8 4HY

Inspection dates 14–15 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Students make inadequate progress in English, mathematics and most other subjects because teaching is inadequate.
- By the end of Key Stage 4, the standards achieved by students in English and mathematics are low. Students are inadequately prepared for the next stage in their education, training or work.
- Marking, planning work that meets the needs of students of different abilities and checking progress during lessons are all key weaknesses in the teaching.
- Students are not challenged sufficiently in lessons because expectations of what they can achieve are too low.
- The advice and guidance offered to students are inadequate. There are too few courses and subjects available to enable students to pick those that are best suited to them.
- The behaviour and safety of students are inadequate. The exclusion rate is too high, attendance is low and punctuality is poor. Academy leaders lack a strategic plan to improve the situation over time.
- Students' attitudes to learning are inadequate. This varies from misbehaviour and disruption in lessons to students lacking pride in the presentation of their work.
- Academy leaders and governors have had no impact on improving teaching and learning. Consequently, the quality of teaching has declined to inadequate.
- The academy has wasted the pupil premium funding allocated to raise the achievement of those eligible for it. The use of this funding has had negligible impact.
- The sixth form is inadequate. The range of opportunities provided and teaching, leadership and achievement are inadequate.

The school has the following strengths

- Anti-bullying is promoted effectively. Students have a good understanding of different forms of bullying and demonstrate tolerance and respect for individual differences.
- The education of the students who are deaf is good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 44 lessons and observed 43 teachers.
- Inspectors met with students to discuss their behaviour and lessons, and reviewed their work.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the academy trust, the Interim and Executive Principals, staff, and students.
- Inspectors were unable to take account of the questionnaire responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) because too few had been submitted.
- They looked carefully at school data on students' attainment and progress, the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, procedures for managing the performance of teachers, and the school's development plan.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined by inspectors.

Inspection team

Tim Bristow, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Julia Wright

Her Majesty's Inspector

Pamela Hemphill

Additional Inspector

Sally Lane

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

- This is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The large majority of students come from White British backgrounds. Other students come from a number of minority ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The proportion supported through school action is also above average.
- A much larger-than-average proportion of the students are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding in this school for students who are looked after by the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The academy does not meet the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement.
- The academy opened in September 2009. It is jointly sponsored by Nottingham University and Sir David Samworth.
- In September 2013, the Principal left the academy.
- The sponsors have recently established a partnership with the Torch Academy Gateway Trust. The governors have delegated leadership powers to the Executive Principal of this trust, who has appointed an Interim Principal. The Executive and Interim Principals took up their posts two weeks before the inspection.
- Prior to September 2013, the academy had placed 17 students with 17 alternative providers. In September this was reduced to four providers. Twelve students attend Stone Soup Academy, Fuel, The Zone and Equip on a full-time basis.
- Within the academy there is specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs who are deaf. Currently there are eight students in this provision.
- Students in the sixth form used to take AS and A level courses at Bilborough College. This arrangement has ended. Currently a few students in Year 13 are continuing their A levels at Bilborough College. Year 12 students have a choice of three work-related courses and the opportunity to resit their English and mathematics GCSEs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching to good or better by:
 - eradicating the large proportion of inadequate teaching
 - providing staff with sharply focused coaching and training to address weaknesses and hold them to account to improve
 - improving marking and the use of individual targets, so students know what they are aiming for and how to improve their work
 - promoting the importance of homework and then ensuring that it is of high quality.
- Increase the rate of progress of all groups of pupils in all subjects by:
 - demonstrating higher expectations of what students should achieve by insisting on a high rate

of work in every lesson

- training teachers to use assessment information well to set work that is at the right level of difficulty for students' different abilities and to check that students make good progress in lessons
- holding teachers to account for giving disabled students and those who have special educational needs the help they require in lessons to overcome the barriers to learning that they experience
- challenging the most able students throughout lessons, so they are pushed to think harder and expected to produce work of a much higher quality.

■ Improve the behaviour and safety of students by:

- creating and implementing a strategic plan to reduce the exclusion rate and improve attendance
- ensuring that teachers insist on much higher standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons
- promoting spiritual and cultural development effectively through the curriculum.

■ Strengthen leadership and governance at all levels by:

- securing basic day-to-day management structures such as the timetable, so the academy runs smoothly
- changing the staffing structure, so that it is fit for purpose and staff are rewarded appropriately for their teaching and leadership responsibilities
- equipping leaders at all levels, initially senior leaders, with the necessary skills so that they can fulfil their responsibilities
- establishing the purpose of the sixth form and then providing appropriate post-16 courses that meet the needs of students
- securing equality of opportunity for students by providing them with the courses, subjects and advice that they require to improve their future economic well-being
- ensuring that governors are much more rigorous in holding leaders to account for academy improvement
- making sure that pupil premium funding is spent appropriately to improve outcomes for those students for whom it is intended.

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 management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- The proportion of students who gained five GCSEs graded C or above including English and mathematics was low in 2012 and 2013. This is because from Year 7 to Year 11 only a minority of students made the expected progress and the majority made slow progress. An alarming proportion of students made no progress at all in English and mathematics.
- Students join the academy with standards that are lower than expected. The gap then continues to widen at Key Stages 3 and 4 because of the slow progress that they make. The average grade attained by the students in GCSE is grade D. Students who are eligible for the pupil premium funding do less well than this and make slower progress. They attain an average of grade E. The points these students score in English and mathematics examinations show that the standards they achieve are approximately a year behind all students nationally.
- In 2012 and 2013, all students were entered early for their mathematics GCSE at the end of Year 10. This was of little benefit to them and did not prepare them well enough for the future. Only 8% gained a grade B or above and half gained a grade C. None of the students was given the opportunity to re-sit the exams.
- Apart from those in the deaf provision, disabled students and those who have special educational needs across the academy make slow progress because teachers do not pay specific attention to their individual needs. They are expected to do the same work in lessons as all the others. In contrast, the students in the designated deaf provision are supported well and their achievement is good.
- More-able students are not provided with work that is challenging enough. They have to listen to explanations at the start of lessons that do not stretch their thinking because they are the same for everyone. They have to complete the same work as the others before they reach the more challenging extension activities.
- Students' achievement is also inadequate in science, design and technology, most of the work-related subjects, modern foreign languages and the humanities.
- Students are hampered by weak reading, literacy and numeracy skills that are not promoted or improved adequately across different subjects. For example, in one mathematics lesson, Year 11 students were struggling with work that primary-age pupils would be expected to complete successfully.
- The achievement of students in the sixth form is inadequate. A few gain university places, but standards in A levels are falling and are below average. For those in Year 12, the very limited range of courses does not equip them adequately for the next stage in their education or training.
- The academy is successfully fostering a love of sport and team games amongst a significant number of its students. Students were observed developing skills in rugby, badminton, football and other team activities at a good rate because teaching was effective.
- The achievement of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is generally better than that of other groups. For example, the few students who speak English as an additional language make

much faster progress than the others.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- The majority of teaching is inadequate or requires improvement. Consequently, students do not make the progress that they should because the quality of their learning from lesson to lesson is not good enough. In mathematics, science and most work-related courses, too much teaching is inadequate. This is why students' progress is so slow.
- Teachers' expectations of what students should achieve are not high enough. This is reflected in weaker lessons, where teachers set the same work for all students regardless of their ability or prior learning. Targets are not challenging enough and insufficient attention is paid to checking the progress of students over time to ensure that they are on track to meet them.
- Teachers pay little attention to the progress students are making in lessons. This means that students move from one activity to another, regardless of whether they are struggling because they find the work too hard or too easy.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are not taught well. Even though these students' specific needs are recorded on lesson plans, teachers' pay little attention to them. Leaders responsible for these students do not check sufficiently whether they receive work that is appropriate for them. The exception to this is the students who are deaf. They are ably supported by teaching assistants in lessons and this ensures that they make good progress.
- Marking is inadequate. In some subjects, such as science, engineering and mathematics, it appears that the books have rarely been looked at by the teachers. Where work is marked, the advice given is of little use. One consequence of this is that the presentation of students' work is inadequate.
- Students report that in most subjects they are rarely given homework. This hinders their progress and does not foster the development of the personal study skills that are necessary for future education and training.
- In English, the teaching team has strengthened and, in the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was good. However, teaching is inadequate over time because teachers and leaders have not used assessment information well enough to ensure that students made good progress from one year to the next. They have not compared students' rate of progress with national expectations well enough. Consequently, too many students have not made the expected progress.
- There is some good teaching in subjects such as physical education, drama, art, geography and modern foreign languages.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- Attendance is below average, and low in the sixth form and for those attending alternative provision. The exclusion rate varies over time, but is too high. Leaders responsible for these aspects do not check the trends over time or have a systematic plan to raise the attendance rate or reduce the exclusion rate. Their procedures only react to the situation at any given time.
- A significant proportion of students have not developed a good attitude to learning because teachers do not foster this effectively. Consequently, some students regularly come to lessons late, take little care over the presentation of their work, do not try hard enough to complete

their work or, in the worst cases, misbehave and disrupt lessons with inappropriate behaviour.

- In some cases, teachers do not take sufficient responsibility for the behaviour of the students they teach. When this occurs, students are sent out of the class to meet with a member of staff on the inclusion team. Very occasionally, inspectors observed unhappy students in the corridor waiting for a member of staff to arrive.
- In the past, the alternative provision used by the academy has been ineffective. Since September 2013, providers have been changed, but the academy does not yet know whether this is having an impact on students' behaviour and achievement. The extremely low attendance rate of a few would indicate that it is not.
- The attitudes and behaviour of students in the sixth form provide a poor role model for students in the rest of the academy to aspire to. The underlying reason for this is that leaders have not fostered a sixth-form identity or established it as a viable or purposeful next step for students leaving Key Stage 4.
- Students report that very little bullying takes place and that staff actions are effective when it occurs. The academy goes beyond this and promotes a good understanding of homophobic and cyber-bullying and tackles discrimination effectively. The atmosphere around the academy is calm as students move between lessons and enjoy their break times. At these times, most students are considerate and respectful of each other.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The quality of teaching and achievement has declined because school leaders have proved to be ineffective. Most leaders at all levels lack the necessary experience and expertise to lead. In too many cases, leaders do not work well enough together to make systematic improvements to teaching, behaviour and achievement.
- The timetable and staffing structure are dysfunctional. This inhibits the smooth day-to-day running of the academy. Occasionally, students were observed who did not know where their lessons were being taught. In one class, the teachers read out registers of names, only to be told by students that their classmates were now in a different class. Some teachers are teaching subjects that they have no expertise in because there are shortages of specialists in key subjects such as mathematics.
- The leadership of teaching performance is not fit for purpose. Teachers have been able to attend courses and training, but this has had little impact on improvements in practice because leaders have not held them to account for this. Staff are given financial rewards for teaching and leadership that are not justified, given their weak performance.
- Assessment information is unreliable. There is little rigour to the collection of this information. This means that, throughout the academy, teachers and leaders have a weak grasp of the progress made by students.
- The advice, care and guidance for students when they select GCSE and post-16 courses are inadequate. Students said they were bewildered when they chose to do information and communication technology but were placed on a food technology course or a child-care course. Students were placed on courses on a first-come first-served basis because of a shortage of places. This is wholly unfair and does not give them equality of opportunity. There are insufficient post-16 courses to provide students with future education, training or career

pathways.

- The academy does not promote students' spiritual and cultural development well enough.
- The leadership of those responsible for students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, disabled students and those who have special educational needs is inadequate. There is no cohesive or strategic plan to underpin what it is that staff should be aspiring to achieve for these students.
- Last year, the sponsors did not hold the academy leaders to account with sufficient rigour. They presided over a decline in teaching and achievement. Once the exam results for 2013 were known, this changed decisively. Since September 2013, the necessary steps have been taken to place the academy in a position where it can start to improve.
- The Executive and Interim Principals have a proven track record of school improvement. They already have a thorough and astute understanding of the weaknesses in the academy and have prepared a useful development plan to tackle these. Since they have arrived, the staff and students have responded well to the changes already taking place. Teachers and other professionals demonstrate that they care for their students and desire to do better for them.
- Inspectors recommend that the academy may appoint newly qualified teachers as part of the pending reorganisation of the staff structure. Their development and mentoring should be the responsibility of the teachers with proven expertise from the Torch Academy Gateway Trust (which has teaching school status) and a nominated governor should keep a careful check on their progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors transparently report that last year they made some serious mistakes in governance so that the academy now requires special measures. They accepted the positive messages they received about the performance of the academy from a range of external sources, even though they were uneasy about the achievement of students.
 - Governors did not effectively hold the leaders to account for the rewards paid to teachers for their performance or for the use of pupil premium funding. Last year, pupil premium funding was approximately £370,000. This funding was used for a range of projects and salaries that had little to do with raising the achievement of students eligible to benefit from this funding. The governing body did not challenge leaders sufficiently on the quality of teaching or check that the financial rewards received were appropriate.
 - Since September 2013, the governing body has taken the necessary, determined and resolute action required to start the academy on the journey to becoming good. They have taken great care to ensure that the Torch Academy Gateway Trust has proven capacity for school improvement. The governing body is made up of a group of capable governors who demonstrate that they have a thorough understanding of what needs remedying and have learnt from their mistakes. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet 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	135761
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	427800

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	796
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Steen
Headteacher (Executive Principal)	John Tomasevic
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2012
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