

# The Roundhill Academy

997 Melton Road, Thurmaston, Leicester, LE4 8GQ

## Inspection dates

5–6 February 2014

|                                |                      |                          |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected |          |
|                                | 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 is a harmonious community. A clear ethos of mutual respect exists between adults and students and amongst the students themselves.
- Students make good progress in all years and across most subject areas. Results in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3 are above average.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are making good progress, as are those eligible for support through pupil premium funding.
- Teaching is good and sometimes it is outstanding. In most lessons teachers set challenging work that helps students to improve their skills and understanding.
- Students' behaviour is good. Their positive attitudes to their learning and their strong relationships with adults and each other make a significant contribution to their good achievement.
- The academy's work to ensure students are safe is outstanding. Teachers teach students how to be safe at all times and make sure that they understand and manage any risks that they may encounter beyond school.
- The new Principal, senior leaders and governors share a commitment to improving teaching and achievement and finding new ways of making this good school even better.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students' literacy skills are not developed equally well in all subjects, particularly in the case of a minority of more-able students.
- Subject leaders do not take enough responsibility for monitoring and tracking the progress being made by students and cannot therefore ensure that any underachievement is spotted quickly and addressed promptly.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons, three of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. The inspection team also made short visits to personal development sessions, observed a student-led assembly and saw 'Shakespeare Live' performances from two classes.
- Meetings were held with groups of students from all years. Other meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and staff responsible for leading subjects and managing student progress. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the consultant adviser to the school.
- Inspectors looked carefully at the 49 responses to the 'Parent View' online questionnaire, two letters and one text message from parents and at the 38 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a range of documents including progress and attainment information. The system used to manage the performance of teachers was examined as well as documentation describing improvement planning, the academy's own evaluation of how well it is doing and a range of policy documents. Information provided by the academy's consultant adviser was also considered.
- Inspectors looked at the work in students' books in a wide range of subjects

## Inspection team

Liz Talmadge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

William Cassell

Additional Inspector

Champak Chauhan

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Roundhill Academy converted to become an academy in April 2012. When its predecessor school, Roundhill Community College was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The academy serves the community of Thurmaston on the outskirts of Leicester. It is a smaller than average middle school, teaching 11 to 14 year old students in Years 7 to 9.
- The Principal has been in post since August 2013.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (funding from the government to support students in local authority care and those entitled to free school meals) is a little below average.
- The large majority of students are from White British background. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is a little higher than average with the majority being of Indian heritage. There are very few students whose first language is not English.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus is below average. The proportion supported through a statement is average.
- There are no students taught off-site.
- Governors are actively exploring the option of becoming an 11-16 academy in the near future. Consultations with parents have already taken place and governors have drawn up a business plan.

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

- Improve the achievement of some more-able students, especially those just on the boundary of a Level 5, so that their progress is consistently good in all their subjects by:
  - ensuring that these students are systematically taught how to write at greater length, read challenging materials for longer periods of time, and engage in demanding speaking and listening activities.
- Ensure that subject leaders take more responsibility for monitoring and tracking progress within their subject areas so that they can quickly identify and react to any underperformance.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the academy with attainment that is very similar to that found in most schools. The academy sets them challenging targets and between Year 7 and Year 9 students make good progress. The vast majority make at least the amount of progress that would be expected of them and many make progress that is better than would be expected.
- Test and assessment information seen during the inspection indicates students currently in Year 9 are working at a good standard in English and Maths. Standards in science, design technology, art, music and PE are good, whilst those in history, geography and modern foreign languages are less good for some groups of students, such as those who have only just gained a Level 5.
- Disabled students, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make particularly good progress. This is because they are well supported by teaching assistants who know them well and provide suitably challenging activities to help them to make good progress with their learning. Students whose first language is not English, such as Indian students, also make good progress.
- Those students who are entitled to pupil premium funding also achieve well by the end of Year 9 and are achieving the same standards in English and mathematics as the rest of their year group. This is because the funding spent on additional teaching time and training for teachers has been effective and used to provide good quality support and intervention to accelerate learning for these students.
- The school receives additional funding to enable Year 7 students who enter the school with low levels of attainment in English and mathematics to 'catch up'. Some of this funding has been spent on appointing a teaching assistant to support students with literacy needs and some on training staff to understand what it is that causes barriers to learning. This has allowed the academy to provide effective specialist support to students to help them to develop their skills for learning.
- Most of the most-able students are making the same good progress as other students. However, this is not the case for all of them. For some, their progress in English, history, geography and modern foreign languages is hampered by having too few opportunities to practise extended writing, sustained reading, and challenging speaking and listening activities.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school is typically good and sometimes outstanding. The very good relationships between teachers and students means that students are keen to try new things and respond enthusiastically to the opportunities they are given. Students work hard and listen carefully to their teachers.
- Lessons are well-planned and demonstrate teachers' thorough knowledge of students' levels of achievement. Teachers check students' work frequently to ensure that they are learning and making good progress.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress in lessons because teaching assistants provide valuable additional support to them.

- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to design activities that students are interested in and that engage them in their learning. The best lessons are well-structured and allow students to consolidate their learning and practise new skills.
- Students' books are marked regularly and teachers' comments help students to reflect on their work and make improvements that will help them to reach their targets. The use of 'the purple pen of progress', seen in English for example, makes it clear to students that they play an important role in managing their own learning.
- Students are set challenging targets in all subjects and the best lessons reinforce what they need to do to reach them. Supported by their teachers, they assess their own progress and identify their next steps in learning with increasing confidence.
- Literacy and communication skills are taught well and generally reinforced appropriately in most subjects. However, across the academy, there is not enough emphasis on ensuring the most-able develop the confidence and ability to complete more extended written pieces, to read more challenging texts, and to engage in more demanding speaking and listening activities.

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

- Behaviour in lessons is good. Students display very positive attitudes to their learning and show respect for each other and for their teachers. The academy's procedures for dealing with any instance of poor behaviour are clear and consistently applied by all staff. This results in very good relationships throughout the academy and supports students' good achievement.
- The vast majority of students are keen to succeed in lessons and work hard and try their best. Many are very enthusiastic about participating in the very wide range of extra activities, clubs and visits available to them at lunchtime and after school.
- The academy has very high expectations of students' behaviour. Consequently, behaviour during break and lunchtimes and in the school dining hall is calm, orderly and sensible. Students behave thoughtfully and safely. They are polite to visitors and show respect for the fabric of the building.
- Exclusions are rare. During the inspection, reliable evidence was seen of the carefully planned intervention and support given to individual students at risk of infringing the academy's code of conduct.
- The academy's work to ensure students are safe and secure is outstanding. The academy site is safe, buildings and gates are secured throughout the day and teachers are constantly aware of safety issues in lessons. In a design and technology lesson, students were taught how to use a craft knife safely by memorising a rhyme. They enjoyed this activity and had a way of remembering exactly how to avoid accidents. Parents and students are confident that the academy is a very safe place.
- Students report that the school teaches them a lot about e-safety and how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of situations. They report that, if they are worried about anything, 'There is always someone to talk to about things'.

- Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively. There were no concerns raised about bullying during the inspection and an assembly led by students seen during the inspection demonstrated that students are clearly aware of the consequences of bullying.
- Attendance is a little above average and is improving and the attendance of those who miss a lot of school is improving rapidly. Students are on time to lessons and arrive with the equipment necessary to start the lesson promptly.

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

- The leadership of the new Principal has brought a fresh momentum to the academy whilst the established leadership of the senior team has ensured stability during a time of change. The ethos of the academy is founded on high expectations and challenge balanced with good support and care. This is valued by parents, the vast majority of whom would recommend the academy to others.
- Senior leaders know the academy well and there is good evidence that improvement planning is having an impact on raising standards. They observe lessons being taught, look at students' work and 'drop in' to lessons to check that students are making good progress. However, subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and tracking the progress being made by students so they cannot ensure that any underachievement is spotted quickly and addressed promptly.
- There is a good programme of training for teachers and there are regular opportunities for teachers to share the good practice found in the academy. For those few teachers whose teaching requires improvement, there is a robust coaching programme. Pay increases for teachers are based on them teaching consistently good or better lessons. Individual support and coaching are provided for any teacher identified as requiring improvement in any aspect of their teaching.
- Students are tested and assessed on a regular basis to check on their progress. The systems used to track students' progress are reliable and show that the current Year 9 students are likely to improve on the progress seen by equivalent groups in previous years.
- The curriculum offers a good range of subjects with extra subjects, such as GCSE Art, running after school. The range of additional curriculum opportunities is extensive. 'Shakespeare Live' performances were seen during the inspection and demonstrated the enthusiasm and understanding of students. There are also many opportunities to engage in performing arts and sporting activities. An ASDAN course supports the development of basic skills for some Year 9 students.
- The support for disabled students and those with special educational needs is very good and there are good support plans in place for individuals. Teaching assistants are very well used and support the good progress made by these students.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a clear strength of the academy. This is reflected in the good relationships between students, their generosity to one another when working together and their respect for the academy's strong moral code. The development of students' cultural and spiritual education can be found in lessons such as the aboriginal theme seen in art and in a wide range of visits to places as diverse as the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, local temples and trips to France.

- The academy works successfully to foster good relationships with parents and letters from parents received during the inspection showed that parents feel well informed and engaged in their children's education.
- Students receive good advice about the options that are available to them and are well-prepared for when they leave school and pursue their education further.
- The academy has received good support from the consultant adviser it has appointed, following its conversion to academy status. The local authority continues to offer support through the provision of training for governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors take their roles and responsibilities very seriously and are currently reviewing their internal committee structures to make sure that they meet current and future needs, should they become an 11-16 academy. They take advantage of the training provided by Leicestershire County Council to ensure that they are completely up to date in their knowledge and understanding.
  - Governors are reflective and thoughtful and between them have many skills. They have a thorough knowledge about the performance of the academy and can readily identify which groups of students are making the best progress and know what steps senior leaders are taking to improve outcomes for some of the more-able students.
  - Governors expect senior leaders to report to them regularly on the impact of additional funding received from the government to support vulnerable students.
  - Governors play a key role in managing the performance of the Principal and also in ensuring that the performance management system for staff is robustly implemented.
  - Governors ensure that safeguarding meets statutory guidance.

## 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 students' needs. This ensures that students 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 students' needs. Students 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 students 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> | 138079 |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | N/A    |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 425061 |

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

|  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Middle deemed secondary          |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy converter                |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11–14                            |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                            |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 490                              |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body               |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Bob Payne                        |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | James Tickle                     |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | N/A                              |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 0116 2693896                     |
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