

# Arnold Hill Academy

Gedling Road, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 6NZ

## Inspection dates

5–6 December 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Achievement is inadequate. Too many students do not make the progress expected of them in English and mathematics, particularly those students supported by pupil premium funding. Achievement was poor in these GCSE subjects in 2012, and English declined further in 2013.
- The academy's most able students underachieved across a wide range of GCSE subjects in 2012 and 2013.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement. It is not consistently good enough to ensure students achieve well.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what the most able students can achieve.
- Not all teachers regularly check students' class work to correct misunderstandings and target their support effectively.
- Behaviour requires improvement because students' attitudes to learning are not as positive as they need to be to help them progress.
- Leadership and management require improvement. Senior leaders and governors have an over-optimistic view of the academy's performance. Whilst significant changes in several areas have now taken place, academy leaders and governors did not react quickly enough to address underachievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed 'progress leaders' are having a positive effect on raising student achievement. The academy's current data reflect recent improvements.
- Systems to improve the quality of teaching are beginning to have an effect.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students achieve very well because teaching is consistently good or outstanding and a wide range of courses are available to them.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well.
- Students feel safe, and attendance is well above average. Relationships are good throughout the academy and students appreciate the efforts made by teachers to support them.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted well.

## Information about this inspection

- Additional Inspectors observed 57 lessons taught by 57 teachers, including one cover teacher. There were four joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the academy on 13 January and observed a further 15 lessons. Four of these observations were conducted jointly, two with the Principal and two with the head of academy.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and subject leaders. Inspectors also met with the special educational needs coordinator, the senior members of staff responsible for data, attendance and safeguarding, and the progress leaders. A meeting took place with the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and three governors and a telephone call took place with the Chair of the Governing Body. Her Majesty's Inspectors conducted a further meeting with governors.
- Inspectors listened to the views and opinions of groups of students from all year groups and talked to students in lessons and around the academy during social times.
- The views of 109 parents who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, as were three additional letters and a telephone conversation with a parent.
- Inspectors observed the work of the academy and looked at information about students' progress and attainment, the academy's improvement plan and its own evaluation of how well it is doing. Inspectors also looked at the system for tracking students' progress and the results of recent assessments. They also looked at staff training and the systems used to manage staff performance. Records of governing body meetings and a range of policy documents were also considered.

## Inspection team

Elizabeth Talmadge, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anne White	Additional Inspector
Kevin Harrison	Additional Inspector
Alan Brewerton	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Pentlow	Additional Inspector
Ian McNeilly	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Rutherford	Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.*

### Information about this school

- Arnold Hill Academy is a very large secondary school based on a split-site campus on the northern edge of Nottingham. It has a large sixth form.
- The school converted to an academy in September 2011. When its predecessor school, Arnold Hill School and Technology College, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- There have been many staff changes this year. The majority of English teachers are new and some teachers of mathematics are new.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for those in the care of the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals or for other reasons, is lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 study work-related courses at Buxton Training Enterprises in Arnold, Premiere Training in Hyson Green and Stone Soup in Nottingham.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve teaching and raise achievement, particularly in English and mathematics, by ensuring that:
  - the differing needs of individual students are met more effectively
  - teachers in all lessons provide challenging activities that demonstrate higher expectations for all students, and particularly the most able
  - all teachers regularly check students' understanding so that misconceptions are corrected and timely support is offered to those who need it most
  - positive attitudes to learning are encouraged consistently.
- Use pupil premium funding more effectively to close the gap in achievement between these and other students.
- Improve behaviour by successfully addressing low-level disruption in lessons, so that positive attitudes to learning are consistent.
- Improve leadership and management by regularly reviewing the academy's performance more critically, leading to areas of concern being addressed quickly.

Ofsted will make recommendations for action on governance to the authority responsible for the academy. An external review of governance, including 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

- Achievement at GCSE in English and mathematics in 2012 was poor. Only half of students made the progress expected of them in mathematics. 59% of students reached this standard in English. Both of these figures are well below national averages. While achievement in mathematics improved in 2013 (though remaining below average), achievement declined further in English.
- In 2012, the academy's most able students underachieved at GCSE across a wide range of subjects. This underachievement was repeated in 2013.
- Students in receipt of pupil premium funding underachieved in GCSE English and mathematics in 2013. There was a gap of one GCSE grade in English and a grade and a half in mathematics between these students and those students not in receipt of this extra funding. This is a larger gap than found nationally and it is not closing quickly enough.
- Early entry to GCSE mathematics has not ensured that enough students are making the progress expected of them.
- Achievement was good in some GCSE subjects in 2013, namely French, Spanish, geography, home economics, performing arts and art.
- Changes to leadership and staffing in the English and mathematics departments, new approaches to teaching and the use of assessment information have led to recent improvement in students' achievement. Achievement has improved in the first term of this academic year across most subjects.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good. These students get good individual and small group support, both in and outside lessons.
- While the majority of students behave well in lessons, too many show negative attitudes to learning which directly affects their progress.
- The academy has made good use of the Year 7 'catch-up' funding to support students who need extra help with reading and communication skills in Years 7 and 8. This has led to an improvement in literacy skills that better supports their achievement in all subjects.
- A small proportion of students in Years 10 and 11 follow full-time off-site specialist training courses. These provide an opportunity for students who might have been at risk of exclusion to engage with learning, and they achieve well on these courses. A smaller group of students follow part-time courses and they also do well. Each student is supported individually through a key worker who tracks their progress and attendance.
- For the last three years, students joined the sixth form with attainment that is just below average. However, this is because many of these students have not been well served by the academy when they were younger. In 2013, results were typically above average. This represents outstanding progress made in the sixth form stage.

**The quality of teaching****requires improvement**

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not been good enough to ensure that students make good progress.
- In the lessons where teaching requires improvement, the activities do not sufficiently engage or challenge students, particularly the most able. In these lessons teachers often intervene too often and with too little effect, and they do not check students' understanding regularly enough to correct misconceptions and offer timely support or challenge when it is needed. The individual needs of students are not always met. The 'minimum targets' given to more-able students are set too low in these lessons.
- The teaching of pupils supported by the pupil premium does not routinely concentrate on making sure that they achieve as much as the rest of the year group does.
- A wide variety of teaching quality was seen during the inspection, from outstanding to inadequate. Almost all teaching seen in the sixth form was good or better.
- The best teaching ensures that all students are making good progress throughout the lesson. Teaching is lively, expectations are high and activities are very well matched to the abilities and interests of students. Teachers show good subject knowledge in thoughtful explanations and carefully targeted questioning. In the best lessons students work together confidently. They learn how to assess their own work in order to deepen their understanding and accelerate their progress.
- The teaching of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is strong and they achieve well. The good and trusting relationships between these students and their teachers enable them to be confident in aspiring to achieve good results.
- Students' work is usually well marked, challenging them to improve the quality of their writing and helping them to deepen their understanding.
- A minority of lessons observed were affected by teachers failing to adequately address the poor behaviour of a few students.
- Students surveyed felt that the quality of teaching has improved recently, and that there is a clearer focus on improving achievement. They expressed gratitude for the support given to them by their teachers.

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

- While the behaviour of the majority of students helps them make progress, too many students have negative attitudes to learning. Further, this is not always addressed successfully by teachers. As a result, some students do not make the progress that they should.
- Most students have the skills to work independently and collaboratively and, given the opportunity, take responsibility for their own learning. These positive attitudes have a good impact on the progress these students make.
- Students in the sixth form show very good attitudes to learning, and this contributes to their

outstanding progress by the end of Year 13.

- Relationships are good. Students usually respond well to the high expectations of adults and show respect towards each other in class and around the academy. Incident logs kept by the academy show that instances of poor behaviour or bullying are infrequent but when they happen they are dealt with appropriately.
- The academy has introduced a new behaviour policy and most members of staff agree that it is being consistently applied. However, most of the small number of students surveyed said that poor behaviour disturbed some of their lessons. Students regularly talking over the teacher was cited as a particular concern.
- Students enjoy attending the academy and attendance has been well above average for a long time. The persistent absence of a few very vulnerable students is reducing over time, and is already low compared to other schools.
- The academy monitors and supports its vulnerable students well and provides a very well-rounded package of support for them and their families. The case studies seen during the inspection show the good impact of support provided by the academy.
- Students attending off-site courses are supported by a key worker so the academy knows on a daily basis that they are attending, are safe and are behaving well.

### **The leadership and management**

### **require improvement**

- Several aspects of GCSE achievement were poor in 2012. Specifically, progress was poor in English and mathematics; the academy's most-able students and those students in receipt of pupil premium funding were underachieving. The leadership and management of the academy did not take effective action quickly enough to address these issues, other than in mathematics where improvements were made. Therefore, underachievement was seen again in 2013, particularly with regard to the academy's most-able students.
- The Principal and his senior leaders have an over-optimistic view of the academy's performance. Pre-inspection, they judged themselves to be 'good' in all areas, despite clear underachievement in certain key aspects.
- While the academy's senior leaders did not react as quickly as required, action has been taken by the Principal, the head of academy and the governors to tackle the deep-seated issues revealed by weak English and mathematics examination results. This included changes to staffing, a focus on progress, and the appointment of new subject leaders. The changes have had a recent, positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and the progress of students.
- The recent appointment of 'progress leaders' for all year groups and the training undergone by all students in the use of the 'progress tracker' demonstrates the efforts being made to secure better progress.
- Teaching is monitored by senior staff on a regular basis. The work of subject faculties is reviewed through a programme of lesson observations. Training is provided for staff to improve their skills, and takes place on a weekly basis. Teachers say they value the support given to them.
- Regular and detailed checking of students' progress enables senior leaders and governors to

correctly identify the groups of students who need to improve their rate of progress. Progress leaders are now ensuring that suitable support is given to individuals, groups or whole classes. This currently includes additional English classes for Key Stage 4 students, support for Year 7 readers, one-to-one mentoring for vulnerable students, and a study skills programme. Progress leaders have also increased the involvement of parents through invitation to meetings about student progress and the curriculum.

- The system for managing the performance of teachers and leaders is good. They are required to meet challenging whole-school or faculty targets before they are considered for pay progression. There is a good induction programme for new staff.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of subject choices in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Students report that they are given good support to make appropriate choices as they progress through the academy. There is also an extensive programme of clubs, activities and visits. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are well supported to give them full access to the curriculum by a specialist group of teachers and a small group of teaching assistants.
- The alternative curriculum offered to the small number of Key Stage 4 students at risk of exclusion from the academy enables them to have an equal opportunity to succeed in an environment that is suited to prepare them for the world of work.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. This is seen, for example, in the way that students relate to each other, their awareness of the world around them, and their involvement in high-quality discussions about moral issues. The academy provides a wealth of cultural opportunities through an extensive programme of visits.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors share the senior leaders' over-optimistic view of the academy. This is because they are too reliant on the senior leaders' interpretation of the information and data provided. Governors are ambitious for the academy and they have been closely involved in the recent changes made to improve the quality of teaching in English and mathematics. They are involved in monitoring teaching and students' achievement which has been helped by recent training. Governors are fully involved in decisions about teachers' pay rises and promotion. They make sure safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137536
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425119

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<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>	1698
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	335
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nigel Bradley
<b>Principal</b>	Robin Fugill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 955 4804
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