

Sirius Academy

296 Anlaby Park Road South, Hull, HU4 7JB

Inspection dates 13–14 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- There has been a steady improvement in standards and progress since the previous inspection and achievement is now outstanding.
- Teachers say they are continuously improving their teaching because the school provides frequent, high quality training and support.
- Teachers plan lessons in detail, and students are given very clear guidance about how to improve.
- Students enjoy school. They work with concentration and enthusiasm and are proud of their achievements.
- The school plans carefully for students' wider education and provides a range of activities to broaden their experiences of life beyond school.
- Students are able to follow a wide range of different courses that suit their abilities and future aspirations.
- In classrooms and around school, students behave very well and act in a responsible manner. They show respect to each other and to adults in school.
- School leaders at all levels have been successful in improving achievement, teaching and behaviour.
- The sixth form is good. Increasing numbers of students are staying on and teaching is improving strongly.
- Governors have a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They play an active role in school and provide outstanding challenge and support.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited parts of 54 lessons including seven joint observations with the principal and vice-principal.
- Inspectors looked at work in students' books. They listened to students read, visited an assembly and observed break time activities. They walked round school with students to find out about aspects of the school other than lessons.
- Meetings were held with the principal, representatives of the academy sponsor, two members of the governing body, key staff and with students.
- Documents looked at included the school's self-evaluation summary, information on students' progress, and documents relating to safeguarding, school management and the curriculum.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the 41 responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View) and through the outcomes of the school's own questionnaires for parents.
- The questionnaires completed by 74 members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Mary Le Breuilly, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anne McAvan	Additional Inspector
Judith Gooding	Additional Inspector
Susan Tabberer	Additional Inspector
Alan Brewerton	Additional Inspector
Susan Lewis	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sirius Academy is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students from ethnic minority backgrounds is average and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is slightly below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government to support students for those known to be eligible for free school meals and children in local authority care) is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled students or those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is almost twice the national average.
- There is specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs in the school. The academy hosts the local authority secondary resourced provision for students with hearing impairment; 24 students are currently supported by this provision. The resource base staff are employed by the local authority Integrated Physical and Sensory Service., which is also based at the academy.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision at the Hessle Road Network, through placements with the Prince's Trust, and in the Ashwell Pupil Referral Unit.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Providing improved guidance to sixth form students prior to their selection of courses so that staying-on rates improve further.
- Correct errors in students' spelling, punctuation and grammar and give greater emphasis to the standards of presentation of students' work.
- Work with the local authority specialist teachers to improve the progress in English made by students who are hearing impaired, particularly in writing so that intensive specialist support is put into place swiftly and its effectiveness is monitored rigorously.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students join the school with attainment that is well below average. They make outstanding progress in most subjects so that, by the end of Year 11, the proportion gaining five A* to C grades including mathematics and English are in line with those seen nationally.
- The progress students make in English has been outstanding in each of the years since the previous inspection. Progress in mathematics has improved rapidly and it is now outstanding.
- Learners who are eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium make similar progress and have similar attainment to their peers and sometimes do even better. This is due in part to the additional support the school provides for them. Their achievement compares very well to the achievement of similar groups nationally, including in English and mathematics.
- The school makes good use of the Year 7 'catch up' funding and has used the funds for a range of measures to support literacy; for example, the purchase of online reading software that has had a positive impact in raising students' reading ages.
- Disabled learners, those who have special educational needs and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable are extremely well supported. Their achievement is outstanding because their progress is carefully monitored and they receive effective support, with a strong focus on developing skills in reading, writing and mathematics. This helps them to keep up with their studies in all subjects. The most-able students in school are now making good progress towards their challenging targets.
- The achievement of students who have hearing impairment is good overall, particularly in mathematics, sciences and practical subjects. The school has focused on improving the reading of these students, and the progress they make in reading is now good. Their progress in writing is more variable than in reading.
- In 2013, the school entered all students early for GCSE mathematics. They are now selecting only those students who would benefit from taking examinations before the end of Year 11; for example, students whose attendance is a cause for concern. This has eliminated unnecessary early entries.
- Attainment and progress in the sixth form are good overall. Increasing numbers are joining the sixth form. Although the picture is improving, there are still too many students who fail to complete their courses. In many subjects, there are still very small groups and this makes it difficult to reliably gauge how well students in individual subjects are progressing, but standards are rising overall.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers and other staff ensure that outstanding learning and progress take place at the school through a combination of consistently good teaching, and support that ensures learners do not fall behind.
- Almost all of the teaching observed during the inspection was of high quality, and the evidence from students' work and the progress that they make indicates that teaching is outstanding over time. Teachers have high expectations of students and they plan lessons with care. They provide

students with activities that interest and engage them. They ask questions that encourage students to think and that deepen their understanding, and they make good use of resources.

- Students have a very clear understanding of how well they are doing in different subjects. The whole-school approaches to explaining what is expected at different levels are consistently followed. Effective use of target sheets makes clear to students what they should do to improve their work in future. Marking provides additional advice on how to improve but spelling, punctuation and grammar are not consistently corrected. Students' presentation is sometimes sloppy; for example, drawing diagrams that require accuracy without using a ruler.
- Homework is set regularly and students are able to access resources at home through the school website. This contributes to the progress that they make.
- There are many opportunities for students to practise and develop literacy, numeracy and communication skills across the curriculum; for example, skim-reading texts to extract information or using analogue weighing scales in food technology.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. The sixth form has been open since September 2010 and teachers are increasingly confident at tackling the demands of teaching post-16 courses. Students' progress is reviewed regularly and good-quality feedback means they know how to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of learners is outstanding. Students quickly adapt to the very high expectations about their conduct in the school, despite in some cases having had a poor record of behaviour in previous schools.
- The school has been successful in creating a strong and positive climate for learning. Students' attitudes to learning are extremely positive. Relationships between staff and students are warm and show mutual respect. Adults in the school act as good role models for their students and students are keen to live up to the high expectations of staff.
- Disruption in lessons is rare. There are thorough and thoughtful behaviour policies in place, and staff, students and parents are all very clear about expectations and sanctions relating to behaviour. A strong monitoring system means that students who are struggling to comply with the rules are quickly picked up and supported. As a result, fixed-term exclusions have been significantly reduced.
- Students are proud of their school environment and there is very little litter or graffiti. They are welcoming and friendly to visitors, and helpful and polite to each other and to the staff.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet all statutory requirements.
- Students have a good awareness of different forms of bullying. They told inspectors that bullying, racism and homophobic incidents are infrequent, and they are dealt with quickly when they occur.
- The school has a range of measures in place to improve attendance and, as a result, it has improved steadily. It is now in line with that of similar schools.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is an integral part of teaching and learning. Tutor times and assemblies reinforce moral development and there is a very broad range of clubs and trips to develop cultural and social awareness, for example theatre trips and residential visits. There are opportunities for students to contribute to the school community; for example, by acting as reading tutors to younger students.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The principal and the senior team provide strong and ambitious leadership for the school. There has been steady improvement since the last inspection and there is an unswerving commitment to deliver outstanding outcomes for all students in school.
- Subject leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of their departments exceptionally well. They use information about students' progress to make sure that any potential underachievement is picked up quickly and dealt with. They meet with their teams regularly, checking on teachers' understanding of standards by looking at work together and sharing the best ideas and practice in their departments so that teachers can learn from each other.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. Teachers in charge of the sixth form have a clear understanding of their roles, know the strengths and weaknesses of the sixth form well and have put appropriate plans in place to make improvements.
- Teachers told inspectors that they felt well supported in school and that they had been given help to improve their teaching. There are well-attended weekly training sessions that teachers can choose to attend. Staff help each other through coaching and peer support.
- The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate and has been used to draw up very effective plans for improvement. Plans are rigorously implemented and closely monitored.
- The curriculum has been carefully planned to meet the needs of the wide range of abilities and interests in the school. The school continually reviews the courses on offer, trying to ensure that they provide the most appropriate pathways to future learning.
- The academy sponsor, Hull College, works closely with the school, providing expertise from its own staff and commissioning external support where it is needed. This has had a positive impact in the sixth form, where the sponsor has helped the school to improve teaching and to refine the range of courses on offer.
- There are strong partnerships with the local authority and other outside agencies that support the smooth running of the Integrated Physical and Sensory Service unit within the school. Recent developments such as whole school training in deaf awareness and more flexible timetabling of students supported by the resourced provision staff have improved the outcomes for these students for example in reading, but there is more work to be done to speed up their progress in writing.
- Pupil premium funding is used to good effect and not only provides additional academic support but helps raise students' aspirations through trips and visits; for example, to universities. As a result, these pupils' achievement is outstanding.
- The school provides effective independent information, advice and guidance to prepare pupils for their options in Key Stage 4 but the advice and guidance provided to sixth formers is not as effective because too many of them fail to complete courses. This is improving, however.

Increasing numbers of students are completing post-16 courses and more students in the sixth form are progressing to university.

- The school is committed to equality of opportunity. It looks carefully at the needs of each pupil in the school and ensures that any barriers to learning are removed.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They provide the principal and staff with a strong strategic direction, and are active in both supporting and challenging the school.
- Governors regularly commission external reviews so that they have an accurate and objective view of the quality of teaching.
- Governors understand the data about the school's performance and they use this to hold school leaders to account. They have been quick to step in when they have identified that standards are not as high as they would wish.
- Governors monitor the budget very effectively, including the use of the pupil premium funding and its impact on eligible students' progress. Governors are very clear about the links between performance and pay. They have put in place clear policies for managing this.

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	135945
Local authority	City of Kingston upon Hull
Inspection number	441270

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	1469
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lee Probert
Principal	Cathy Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2011
Telephone number	01482 352939
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