

The Bolsover School

Mooracre Lane, Bolsover, Chesterfield, S44 6XA

Inspection dates 24–25 June 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| 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 requires improvement. It is not good because

- In 2013, achievement in English fell sharply. Achievement in mathematics was in line with national averages, whilst achievement in additional science was below average. Students' progress in these subjects is not yet securely good.
- Students supported by the pupil premium do not achieve as well as their peers in English and mathematics. They are on average a grade behind in these subjects.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls, particularly in English, languages and humanities.
- The quality of teaching is not improving strongly enough. Not enough teaching is exciting, engaging and challenging. This affects students' attitudes to learning.
- Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are not high enough. As a result, more able students do not make enough progress, and too few of them achieve the highest grades.
- Teachers do not give students clear advice on how to improve their work. As a result, students do not make as much progress as they could.
- In a small number of lessons, there is low-level disruption. Not all teachers apply the academy's behaviour policy consistently.
- Academy leaders have not had sufficient impact on improving the quality of teaching.
- Subject leaders do not all take full responsibility for the achievement of students within their subject areas.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have taken effective action to improve the weaker areas, notably English.
- The safety of students is good. Care and support for them is strong, and students speak highly of the pastoral support they receive.
- Attendance has improved since last year and is now just above the national average.
- The academy works well to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. As a result, students are tolerant, respectful and compassionate.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 part lessons taught by 24 teachers. Four of these were undertaken jointly with members of the academy's leadership team. Inspectors also visited tutor time, assembly and the internal exclusion room.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, five members of the governing body and the academy's improvement partner.
- Inspectors spoke with four groups of students in meetings, as well as at other times, informally in lessons and around the academy. Inspectors observed students' behaviour in lessons, and at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors reviewed the quality of work in students' books.
- Inspectors took account of the very few responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as parental questionnaires that had been carried out by the academy.
- Inspectors reviewed 64 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team assessed other information including: the leaders' own evaluation of the academy's strengths and weaknesses; the improvement plan; attendance and behaviour records; information about students' current achievement and progress; minutes of governing body meetings; external reports and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors evaluated the academy's safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Deirdre Duignan, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Philippa Darley

Her Majesty's Inspector

Margaret Eldridge-Mrotzek

Additional Inspector

Michael Hiscox

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average secondary school. The Bolsover School converted to become an academy school in November 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for those students who, in this academy, are known to be eligible for free school meals and for looked after children) is above the national average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average. The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds.
- The number of students supported through school action is in line with the national average. The proportion of students supported by school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, is significantly above average. A high number of these students are identified with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- A small number of students study for work-related qualifications alongside the normal school curriculum. These are organised by Derbyshire County Council through the local Learning Community.
- From September 2014, the academy will offer Key Stage 5 courses in collaboration with three other local schools and Chesterfield College.
- In 2013, the academy met the government's floor standard for achievement at the end of Key Stage 4. These are the minimum expectations for students' achievement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, and so more students make rapid progress particularly in English, mathematics and science by:
 - eradicating all inadequate teaching
 - ensuring that all teachers communicate high expectations of what students can achieve
 - ensuring that teachers' planning systematically builds students' understanding, so that they are able to apply their learning to new and increasingly challenging work
 - using questions to challenge students and help them think more deeply
 - ensuring that all teachers mark students' work regularly, that they provide students with detailed guidance on how to improve their work, and the time to respond to this advice
 - giving more opportunities for students to develop and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Improve achievement for all students, but particularly for those entitled to pupil premium funding and for those who are most able by:
 - ensuring that the information gathered about the progress of different groups is analysed and used quickly to inform planning and next steps.
- Improve students' behaviour, and in particular, their engagement in lessons by:
 - providing more inspiring teaching to motivate students and to raise their expectations about how much they can achieve
 - ensuring that staff consistently apply the academy's behaviour policy at all times.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:

- ensuring that those teachers whose teaching is not consistently good, have individual programmes of support and are closely monitored, so that students make better progress in these classes
 - making sure that subject leaders take full responsibility for driving improvements in the quality of teaching in their departments, so that students' achievement is consistently good across all subjects.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Students enter the academy with achievement that is generally below the national average.
- In 2013, the proportion of students achieving five GCSEs at grade C or above including English and mathematics fell steeply from the previous year. This was because fewer students gained a C grade or above in English. Academy leaders have put in place a rigorous action plan to ensure that students do better in English this year. Current data, which has been subject to thorough internal moderation and external verification, indicate that English results will recover strongly in 2014.
- Attainment in GCSE mathematics rose in 2013 to be in line with national averages. This was a significant improvement on the previous year. However, the number of students who will make good or better progress in mathematics is set to fall this year. Attainment in a number of subjects, including English, science, languages, and humanities were below the national average in 2013. The numbers of students achieving the highest grades at GCSE were below average across a range of subjects.
- Boys did not achieve as well as girls, especially in English, but also in languages and humanities. On average, they were half a grade behind girls in these subjects.
- Too few of the most able students attained the highest A–A* grades across a number of subjects in 2012. Whilst current data indicates that more students will achieve this standard this year, many more should be on track to make more than expected progress, especially in mathematics.
- Students supported by the pupil premium did not achieve as well as their peers in 2013. Too few of them gained five GCSE qualifications at grade C or above. On average, they were almost a grade behind their peers in English and more than a grade behind in mathematics. Current data shows that, although the gaps are not yet narrowing significantly, these students will make better progress this year.
- Current information indicates that the proportion of students who are on track to attain five or more GCSEs at grade C or higher, including in English and mathematics, is set to rise to be in line with national averages.
- Taking into account their current progress and attainment, disabled students, and those with special educational needs, achieve as well as their peers.
- Students' develop their reading and communication skills well across a number of subjects. However, there are fewer opportunities for them to develop and apply their mathematical skills and this is contributing to their making less progress in this subject.
- The Year 7 catch-up premium is being used to fund early intervention reading work. The reading ages of these students are increasing steadily.
- A small number of students attend vocational courses organised by Derbyshire County Council. They achieve well on their chosen courses.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because not enough students or groups of students make good progress over time. Some teaching at the academy is inadequate, largely due to turbulence in staffing, which has impacted on the progress that students make.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what students can achieve. Work in students' books shows that teachers are not assessing students' progress closely enough. This means that they do not always know when to set more challenging work, or when to provide additional support because students have found work too difficult.
- Marking does not always provide students with clear and precise guidance on how to improve their work. Students are rarely given the opportunity to reflect on and respond to their teachers' advice, and as a result, do not make as much progress as they could.
- More able students are not sufficiently challenged, and as a result, do not make progress in line with their ability. Teachers' questioning is used to check students' understanding and recall of facts, but does not always develop and extend their learning.
- Planning for learning is not always skilled enough to deepen students' understanding, particularly in mathematics. It does not focus strongly enough on ensuring that pupils have a strong conceptual understanding of mathematics. For example, students frequently follow a process to solve a problem without understanding why the process works. Thus, they struggle to apply their learning to new and more complex problems.
- Teachers are increasingly helping students to improve their reading and writing skills. Literacy is promoted well across a range of different subjects. For example, in science, teachers regularly remind students about correct grammar and provide opportunities for students to produce extended scientific explanations. There are fewer opportunities for students to develop their mathematical skills across other subjects. As a result, their numeracy skills are not as well developed as they could be.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support the learning of less able students. As a result, these students are making better progress.
- Students were seen to make better progress when they were challenged to develop their thinking, and extend their learning by building on each others' answers. For example, in a Year 9 religious studies lesson, students were challenged to think about the effects of living in poverty, and developed their ideas by sharing their learning with each other. In an English lesson, Year 8 students were taught effective techniques to analyse poetry. They enjoyed the level of challenge this task provided, and made good progress as a result of well-judged support by their teacher.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement because attitudes to learning in lessons are not consistently good. This is often because teaching does not raise students' expectations of what they can achieve. Students report that low-level disruption occurs when teaching does not excite them, or challenge them to do as well as they could. Teachers are not equally effective in managing low-level disruption.
- The academy has recently revised its behaviour policy, resulting in higher expectations and a 'zero-tolerance' approach to poor behaviour. This initially resulted in higher numbers of students

being removed from class. Although these are now reducing, students told inspectors that not all teachers apply the behaviour policy consistently. This view was also reflected in the staff questionnaire.

- Attendance has improved and is now just above the national average. Persistent absence, particularly of students supported by the pupil premium, has significantly reduced. However, the attendance of vulnerable students is still below that of their peers.
- Fixed-term exclusions have reduced. Academy leaders work well with partner schools on strategies to prevent exclusion.
- Students behave well around the academy. They are friendly and welcoming to visitors and are considerate to each other.
- Students have a good awareness of different types of bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying. They are confident that staff will deal with incidents of this type. Incident logs kept by the academy indicate that incidences of bullying are rare and dealt with appropriately.
- The academy works hard to promote respect, tolerance and compassion for others. The fruits of this are seen in the way that most students behave to each other. Those students who spoke to inspectors confirmed this, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs. Students with special educational needs feel safe in, and enjoy school.
- Students behave well in tutor time, because teachers plan activities that promote a sense of community and shared responsibility for behaviour and attendance. Reading together as a class promotes an atmosphere of calm.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Safety is seen as a shared responsibility, and students know who to go to if they have concerns about the wellbeing of their friends. They speak highly of the pastoral care they receive at school. Care is taken to ensure that the academy is safe and that safeguarding policies, procedures and practice are rigorous.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership requires improvement, because teaching is not improving strongly enough. Leaders have taken effective action to challenge some inadequate teaching, but there is little evidence that the academy's current monitoring and evaluating processes are helping all teachers to improve their practice.
- Subject leaders are increasingly aware of the role they have to play in driving and embedding school improvement. However, they do not yet systematically hold teachers to account for the progress that students make in their subjects. Whilst they share a whole-school ambitious view of creating an academic curriculum for students, the quality of teaching is not yet strong enough to ensure that students will learn well in these subjects.
- Academy leaders rigorously and accurately evaluate their work, and have good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the academy. The academy works well with external partners, for example to reduce exclusions in a cluster of schools. The headteacher chairs a local information, advice and guidance group, which aims to increase the employability skills of students in the local area.

- The headteacher has developed links with Chesterfield College and three local schools to offer Key Stage 5 courses to students from September 2014. This is an important step in further raising students' aspirations.
- Academy leaders have acted to ensure that the achievement of those students supported by the pupil premium is improving. It also makes sure that these students are not prevented from taking part in trips and other curriculum opportunities.
- Academy leaders have carefully analysed information about behaviour in class, and have identified teachers who need additional training to improve their behaviour management skills. However, further work needs to be done so that all teachers understand the link between good teaching and good behaviour.
- The academy's curriculum has not always met students' needs and interests. Too few more able students achieve GCSEs in three sciences, largely because of a previously limited options choice. Academy leaders have revised the curriculum in the light of the most recent examination results, and students say they are happier with the wider choice of options available, and with the guidance their teachers give them in making these important decisions. This view was strongly echoed by the parental questionnaires.
- The academy offers a diverse range of extra-curricular opportunities and trips, and monitors participation rates to ensure that as many students as possible engage in the wider life of the academy. It has well-developed links to several international schools and the annual visit to the Gambia, led by the headteacher, enhances students' understanding of the developing world.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the academy. Leaders work hard to promote a culture of tolerance and respect for others, and this is seen in the harmonious relationships between students. The academy has recently gained Stonewall accreditation. The academy's tutor and assembly programme address issues that are important to life in a modern democracy. For example, in a year 8 tutor session, students enjoyed a discussion about the freedom of speech and censorship.
- The academy's safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are increasingly strategic in the way they support and challenge academy leaders. They have an accurate view of the academy's current strengths and weaknesses and hold academy leaders to account on its priorities for improvement. They have strengthened leadership by undergoing appropriate training
 - Governors know how the academy spends pupil premium funding and have an overview of the impact this has on achievement and enjoyment. They are well aware of their role in challenging weaker teaching, and in setting appropriately challenging targets for the performance management of the headteacher. Governors ensure financial probity, and that safeguarding procedures comply with legislation.
 - Governors have wisely decided to undertake an external review of governance in order to strengthen their effectiveness further.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 138836 |
| Local authority | Derbyshire |
| Inspection number | 425066 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 782 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | David Brown |
| Headteacher | Gordon Inglis |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Telephone number | 01246 822105 |
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