

# The CE Academy

Cromwell Campus, Poole Street, Northampton, NN1 3EX

## Inspection dates

8–9 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not applicable	
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
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.

- Students make outstanding progress in English and mathematics because the teaching of these subjects is excellent.
- The most-able Year 11 students gain eight subjects at GCSE, including passes at grades A to C in mathematics, science and the expressive arts.
- Almost all Year 11 students gain a place at college, secure an apprenticeship or find a job when they leave the academy.
- An innovative range of vocational subjects equips students with excellent work-related skills.
- The excellent programme for young mothers helps them to develop parenting skills.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Students feel listened to and are helped to overcome emotional obstacles that would otherwise hinder their progress. They are kept safe.
- A larger number of students returned to mainstream schools in 2013–2014 compared with the previous year.
- All leaders, including the members of the governing body, are meticulous in checking the quality of teaching. The school provides extensive training to teachers to improve their practice and so raise students' achievement
- The headteacher ceaselessly drives improvement for students. This includes the range of courses available for them to develop academically, programmes to help them control their feelings of anger and leadership opportunities to help them succeed as young adults.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons taught across all eight sites and two off-site alternative provisions. Six of these were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- A detailed scrutiny of students' work was carried out.
- A few case studies of students in vulnerable circumstances were examined.
- Meetings were held with staff, students and the Chair of the Governor Body. The lead inspector spoke by telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors examined data relating to students' progress, attendance and re-integration (the number of students returning to mainstream schools). They also examined teachers' planning; the school's development plan; monitoring of teaching and learning information; and a wide range of policies including the appraisal policy and all safeguarding policies.
- Inspectors examined 50 Ofsted questionnaires completed by staff.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire Parent View for an analysis to be made. Inspectors examined the academy's analysis of the completed questionnaire returns submitted by parents and carers in response to the academy's recent parental and carer survey.

## Inspection team

Jeffery Plumb, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kate Robertson	Additional Inspector
Glen Goddard	Additional Inspector
Debra McCarthy	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The CE Academy is based on eight campuses across the county of Northamptonshire. It provides for Key Stage 3 and 4 students at risk from exclusion and those who are permanently excluded from mainstream schools. In addition, it provides education for young mothers.
- The CE Academy is a commissioned service; it is a standalone academy with a board of trustees. The CE Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 November 2012. When its predecessor school, Complementary Education, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- Students are a mix of dual registered (meaning that they remain on the roll of the school from where they came as well as being on the roll of this academy) and solely on the roll of this academy.
- All students are identified as having special educational needs at school action plus. A few students have a statement of special educational needs.
- There are significantly more boys on roll than girls. Most students are in Key Stage 4.
- Most students are White British. None of the minority ethnic students are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students for whom the academy receives pupil premium funding is above the national average. This is additional government funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, from service families or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The academy makes use of 14 off-site alternative provisions: Northampton College; Tresham Institute; Aston Training; Centurion Training; Green Patch; Lunar Racing; Minett Training; Seeds of Change; Skidz; Progressability Energise Ltd; Youth Works; Fire Service; Adventureways (Outdoor Learning); and Maplefields. Another provision, Cromwell Workshop is on the site of one of the London Road campus. These provisions provide a wide range of vocational courses.
- Staff teach across all eight campuses.

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

- Improve the attendance by 3% by June 2015 by:
  - establishing the reasons why a few students do not attend regularly through a one-to-one discussion with them
  - working with these students, their parents and carers and the assistant headteacher with responsibility for driving attendance upwards to draw up and implement plans to help students improve their attendance.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Students' attainment on entry is different for each student. Typically, it is below average in English and mathematics because of the gaps students have in their learning due to poor attendance patterns in their previous schools.
- Almost all students at Key Stage 3 make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Key Stage 4 students make outstanding progress in English and mathematics. From the time they enter the academy until when they leave at the end of Year 11, their rate of progress is faster than what is typical for students over such periods of time. Overall, the attainment by Year 11 remains below national average in these subjects because the catch-up needed from the time they arrive at this academy is so great.
- Year 11 students achieve GCSE passes at grade A to C in a large number of subjects, including mathematics, science, art and design, expressive arts and design and technology. In English language, grades although a little lower, represent outstanding progress from students' starting points. The most-able students achieve eight passes at GCSE.
- Year 11 students achieve BTEC and City of Guilds Level 1 qualifications in a range of vocational subjects taught by off-site alternative provisions. Almost all gain the vocational qualifications, and literacy and numeracy skills required to access college placements to develop their work-related skills further, get a job or secure an apprenticeship.
- Students from minority ethnic groups receive high quality support and make the same outstanding progress as their peers. There is no discernible difference in the rate of progress between boys and girls. The few students with statements of special educational needs mostly make outstanding progress from their starting points.
- Pupil premium students make the same outstanding progress in English and mathematics as their peers. Some make even faster progress than their peers in mathematics.
- Other achievements are outstanding. For example, young mothers learn excellent parenting skills. Similarly, throughout the Key Stage 4 campuses students learn how to cook healthy meals on a tight budget and do exceptionally well with their physical education.
- A few students do not come to the campuses as often as they should. These students do not do as well as those who attend regularly.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Typically, teaching is outstanding at both key stages, including in English and mathematics. The teaching over time is outstanding.
- Relationships are exceptionally positive. Students frequently ask questions of their teachers about the knowledge or concept they are learning. Teachers respond to students' questions, using their excellent subject knowledge, and so move them forward into new learning. This contributes to their excellent enjoyment of, and enthusiasm for, learning.

- Teachers assess where students are when they enter the academy. They then use this information to plan work at the correct level of challenge for each student. For example, in a mathematics lesson focusing on Pythagoras' theorem, students were taken into a discovery of new learning based on what they had learnt in the previous lesson.
- Teachers use a range of methods to support students in reading. Learning support assistants support students who are struggling and this contributes to enhancing their learning. Different teaching styles are used to help students to improve their writing. Teachers' awareness of students' feelings is used to help them produce excellent pieces of creative writing.
- A wide range of resources are used to provide interesting activities to develop students' critical thinking skills. Students enjoy problem-solving activities when working with their hands in a motor vehicle workshop or in a simulated construction site.
- Personalised and flexible approaches are used to help students lacking in confidence because of their learning experiences before entering this school. This was seen in a young mothers' group. As the penny dropped, the students said, 'We never knew that before when adding up numbers with a decimal point,' before going on to calculate the perimeter of a shape.
- Questioning is excellent. It is used to check students' understanding and also to deepen their learning. For example, in teaching science students were questioned about how to use what they learnt in mathematics. Then they went on to succeed in demonstrating all of their information using graphs.
- Excellent marking often takes place on the spot and students are given clear guidance on what they need to improve. There is avoidance of correcting too many mistakes in books because so many students had failed before arriving at this school. Focused corrections are made and then students are followed up on these particular points.

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

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Overall, students arrive at this academy having had severe difficulty in managing their behaviour in their previous schools. Some have not engaged with learning for a long time. Yet teachers are highly effective in listening to students and helping them to overcome their negative feelings about school. In a short space of time, most are keen to succeed and adopt positive attitude to learning. As one student said, 'I am confident now in a small classroom to let the teacher know about my problems with learning.'
- Students have quickly signed up to the academy's behaviour policy. They enjoy receiving post cards home about what they do well and accept the academy's sanctions. When sanctions are required, staff sit with students and discuss how a change in their behaviour can happen. This in line with the school's philosophy about getting students ready for the work place.
- Students respect the academy buildings and grounds. There is no graffiti or litter to be seen. Break and lunch times are family occasions when students show exceptionally well-developed social skills. They welcome visitors and are keen to talk about what the academy does to help them.
- Students say that there is no cyber bullying at school and that racist incidents are rare. Examinations of the academy's logged incident records show that they are right. The few incidents of racism that occurs are dealt with swiftly. Rare incidents of a student 'blowing' are

also dealt with speedily. Students say that they have an adult who they trust at the academy and would tell that adult if anything ever troubled them. There have been no fixed-term exclusions.

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. The students at high risk have detailed support plans and are kept in touch with external agencies, including health professionals, social services and the Youth Offending Service. The academy ensures that the alternative providers it uses are diligent about safeguarding students.
- Students are adept at keeping themselves safe in a work-place environment. They know the importance of wearing steel capped boots when they lay bricks and understand why they must wear gloves when shampooing the hair of a customer in the hair salon.
- Students understand the potential harmful effects of substance misuse and the risks associated with unsafe sex. They know the potential risks when using social media sites on their computers at home and have a good understanding of cyber and prejudiced types of bullying.
- Most students improve their attendance very significantly from what it was in their previous schools. However, there is a small group of students who continue to be persistently absent.

#### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team provide excellent leadership for the school. A strong learning culture is in place and all staff, across all eight campuses, have embraced the vision of the highest achievement for every student.
- The leadership is ambitious. Leaders have a clear understanding of the importance of continuous improvement. There is a commitment to introduce a community cafe into one campus and a desire to improve accreditation opportunities for students even further.
- Since becoming an academy the budget has come under the control of the business manager. She manages this exceptionally well and is able to forecast, based on past trends, the number of partnership schools likely to want to purchase placements.
- Regular and frequent checks on teachers' work and meetings with new staff teams, like the leaders for literacy and numeracy, effectively support the different key stages within the academy. Teachers are held to account for the effect their teaching has on students' achievement. Teaching is getting even better, for example in the approach to teaching reading at Key Stage 3 and focusing on developing students' literacy skills across all subjects.
- Senior leaders closely analyse data to make sure that students make outstanding progress. Where required, they re-organise the level of support provided to give all students equal opportunities to succeed and avoid any possible discrimination. There are many examples: the most vulnerable are provided for; courses are found to match students' interests and needs; and those who lag behind because of not controlling their anger are well supported in overcoming their obstacle to learning.
- The training for teaching has made an exceptionally valuable contribution to teachers' skills, particularly in talking a student through an outburst of emotion.
- The partnership with the teams that support students such as health professionals and the

Youth Offending Service is excellent.

- The individualised programme of study (along with GCSE subjects), under constant review in the context of National Curriculum change and the loss of traditional accreditations, meet students' academic and personal needs exceptionally well.
- An extensively wide range of interesting outdoor activities and work-place opportunities, as well as off-site college courses in a range of vocational subjects, are provided so as to broaden students' horizons and contribute to their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The experience, both informally and formally, to develop students' leadership skills is outstanding. Students enjoy their cultural weeks and their awareness of cultural diversity is promoted exceptionally well.
- The academy promotes students fitness in many ways. It helps them to have physical education; provides them with healthy food; and provides support to overcome addictions to smoking.
- The recent analysis of returns from parent and carers show that they are outstandingly supportive of what the academy does for their children. Staff frequently visit homes and have an excellent understanding of the families they help.
- As a commissioning service, a new relationship with the local authority is beginning to develop well. The school has correctly identified areas to strengthen in this partnership.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is knowledgeable about the academy. It is an ambitious body with a set of skills fit for purpose. They want to see the academy grow its own teachers. Governors work ceaselessly to ensure that a positive learning culture pervades the academy and that every student gets the best possible education and chance in life. They ask, as appropriate, tough questions about students' progress and can demonstrate that they know about the case histories of some children in the most vulnerable circumstance.
- Governors visit the academy regularly and gather evidence about how well it is doing. They have a very good handle on the quality of teaching. Governors are clear that only effective teachers can move up the pay scale. There is a clear and agreed approach to check out how well the headteacher performs and to set her robust targets aimed at improving students' achievement. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively and ensure that the academy meets all requirements in the way of safeguarding students.

## 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>	138967
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	440173

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Academy alternative provision converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	278
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bernard Ingram
<b>Headteacher</b>	Bobbie Kelly
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not applicable
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 239734
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