

# The National CofE Academy

Annesley Road, Hucknall, Nottingham, NG15 7DB

**Inspection dates** 21–22 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The Principal, other school leaders and governors have set high standards for staff and students alike. They know the school's needs well and have put in place effective plans which have brought about big improvements in teaching and learning, and achievement. School leaders are continuing to secure further improvements.
- There is a strongly inclusive ethos in the school with each student valued as an individual. Coupled with high expectations, this has brought about rapid improvement in the behaviour and achievement of students, especially those who are disadvantaged.
- The behaviour of students is good. They attend well, are punctual and display good attitudes to learning. Outside of lessons they are courteous and polite, moving around the school with consideration for others.
- The school's work to keep students safe is outstanding. Students know about different kinds of risk, including when using the internet, and how to keep themselves safe. Any bullying is dealt with effectively.
- Students, including disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well in their GCSEs.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers know their subjects well and have good relationships with students. They carefully plan lessons and mark work well that so that students know how to improve.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress and the majority go on to university. Sixth formers play a full part in the life of the school, supporting younger students and running the school council. The number of leavers not in employment, education or training is extremely low.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not consistently set work that is at the right level for some students, especially the most-able. They do not always question the most-able students deeply enough. Hence, progress is not yet outstanding.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 58 lessons, nine of them jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors looked at students' work and case studies of individuals. They checked the frequency and quality of marking and the progress students made.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, four governors, and senior and middle managers.
- Inspectors took account of the 81 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 108 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation and development plan, the school's information on students' current progress, and records relating to monitoring, behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

John Mallone, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
William Cassell	Additional Inspector
Sumeya Bhikhu	Additional Inspector
Paul Wilson	Additional Inspector
Lynn Williams	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The National CofE Academy is a larger-than-average sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- It converted to become an academy school on 1 August 2011. When its predecessor school, The National School, a Church of England Technology College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs at school action is low at 7%. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also low at 4%. This figure includes six students who have a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plans.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for those in care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is 20%, and this is lower than the national average.
- The students come from predominantly White British backgrounds. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than average.
- The school provides part of the education for a very few of its students at R.E.A.L. Education, First Class Tailored Solutions, Strategic Training Solutions, East Midlands Vocational Academy and Wheelbase Motor Project.
- Some sixth form students undertake some of their studies at The Holgate Academy.
- The school works with the Diverse Academies Learning Partnership (DALP), both receiving support from and providing support to other schools in the partnership.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4. It also meets the interim minimum standards for sixth form students.

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

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding and accelerate rates of progress by:
  - making more consistent use of information about students' abilities to set work at the right level, especially for the most-able
  - ensuring that teachers always ask challenging questions of the most-able to deepen their understanding.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The principal and senior leaders are highly effective in communicating their very high expectations to staff and students alike. They have correctly identified areas where teachers have underperformed and put in effective programmes of support. As a result, teaching and achievement have improved significantly and rapidly, especially in mathematics and modern foreign languages.
- The school very carefully tracks the progress of students on a regular basis. Those who are falling behind are given appropriate support so that most manage to reach their targets. This system has been very effective in bringing about the recent improvements in the school. Regular reporting to parents ensures that they are kept informed of their children's progress and particular concerns are shared rapidly and additional help given.
- The middle leaders are a strength of the school. They rigorously monitor the progress of students in their care and ensure that effective support programmes are put in place for those who fall behind. As a result, there was a big improvement in students' progress in 2014, especially for disadvantaged students. The actions of subject leaders have brought about improvements in several areas, notably in mathematics and modern foreign languages.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. It provides three main routes at Key Stage 4: the purely academic; a mixture of academic and vocational; and the largely vocational. A very small number of students have individually arranged programmes which involve part of their education being offsite. Their attendance, behaviour and progress are very carefully monitored and they benefit from these outside courses. All students participate in activities which encourage them to think about life in the wider community, so that they are well prepared to take their place in modern Britain.
- The school has an extensive and effective programme of careers advice and guidance which begins in Year 7. As a result, students are placed on courses which suit them at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Almost all students leave the school having secured a place in education, employment or training.
- Transition arrangements from primary school are very good. Year 7 students reported that they felt very welcomed and appreciated the help provided to them by older students in the vertical tutor group system. There is a Year 7 'Aspire' group, which caters for those who might find the move to secondary school more challenging. Students in this group feel very safe and well supported. As a result, their progress is good.
- The pupil premium funding has been very effectively used. In 2013-14, the school took the decision to focus on disadvantaged students. It put an additional sum of money to the government funding and introduced a wide range of support measures for this group, including extra teaching and a breakfast club. As a result, there was a large increase in attendance and rates of progress for this group of students. Behaviour also improved, with fewer incidents and a much reduced number of exclusions.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements. All staff and governors have had the relevant training which is regularly updated. The school is a very safe environment. Its inclusive ethos means that it takes every possible care to do what is best for each child, carefully weighing the possible risks and benefits. For example, when students have to be educated at home because of illness, teachers from the school are used, so that students can deal with people they are familiar with and the continuity of their education is ensured.
- Following abolition of National Curriculum levels, the school is considering several models with other members of the Diverse Academies Learning Partnership, (DALP), as it works towards its preferred method of assessment.
- The support which the school has received from the DALP was very useful in the process of appointing a new principal and ensuring a smooth transition. DALP has also played an important role in improving governance, performance in mathematics and modern foreign languages and the achievement of

disadvantaged students.

- Parents, staff and students welcome the improvements that have taken place and strongly endorse the work that the school does to care for and educate its students.
- The school works very effectively to promote equality of opportunity and understanding of and respect for cultures beyond the students' immediate experience and tackles discrimination firmly and exceptionally well. There are many activities built into the tutorial system and assemblies which encourage students to reflect on the experiences of others in this country and abroad. Students are involved in charitable work both locally and internationally.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is particularly strong. All governors undertake regular training so that they can undertake their roles effectively. They have a detailed understanding of how good the teaching is and are very clear about where the strengths and weaknesses lie. Governors oversee the performance management process for teachers, including that of the principal. They know that teachers who do not meet their targets will not receive pay rises and that support measures will be put in place to help them improve. Governors closely question school leaders, especially about achievement and finance. They understood well that disadvantaged students were attending, behaving and achieving significantly worse than others and were closely involved in the decision to devote extra money beyond the government's pupil premium to help improve these students' experience of school. Their actions strongly contributed to the big improvements last year for this group of students.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Students have consistently positive attitudes to learning. They bring the right equipment to lessons, show respect to teachers and one another and are ready to learn. They co-operate well when asked to work together in pairs or small groups and are polite and courteous. As a result, lessons proceed smoothly and progress is good.
- Outside lessons, despite the difficulties posed by narrow stairs and corridors, students behave well and move sensibly around the school so that they get to lessons on time.
- The school environment is well looked after. No graffiti or litter was seen during the inspection. Attractive wall displays are treated with respect. Students wear their uniform with pride and take great care over the presentation of their work.
- The school's rewards and sanctions system is understood by all and works well. Students are keen to gain points which enable them to take part in prize draws.
- Attendance has improved and is now good. In particular, the attendance of disadvantaged students has improved following the recruitment of an attendance officer.
- Sixth formers contribute to the sense of community through voluntary work, such as assisting tutors and working with younger students who need help. They also run the school council, which has brought about changes to things which affect students in their day-to-day life, for example by providing extra benches in recreational areas and making the student planners more useful.
- Students who receive part of their education offsite attend regularly, behave well and are well looked after and kept safe on other premises.

## Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Students, staff and parents all agree that students are kept safe at school. Students are taught how to keep themselves safe. In science, technology and PE for example, they are aware of the potential dangers and know the correct use of equipment.
- Bullying is uncommon and students, staff and parents all report that it is well dealt with when it does occur. Peer mediators help to bring about reconciliation between bully and victim. Racist and homophobic bullying is rare. The school has dealt particularly effectively with some racist name calling in the past. As a result, students have a good understanding of the negative impact of discriminatory language and refrain from using it. The system of restorative practice has contributed to the reduction in the number of incidents and the large reduction in exclusions.
- All visitors to the site are required to sign in and their identity is checked. Those working with children undergo the statutory vetting procedures.

## The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and has improved over time. This has resulted in improved progress and achievement for students.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and students respond with good attitudes to learning. Relationships are strong. Students co-operate well with their teachers and one another, showing a willingness to take on suggestions and advice. This leads to good progress in lessons.
- Teachers break work down into manageable steps so that all students can follow. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson, the teacher asked students to say what similarities and differences they observed between characters in two plays before getting them to make a written comparison. This enabled students to consolidate the idea of similarity and difference before moving to the more difficult task of producing a formal essay comparing the characters.
- Teachers make good use of materials and imaginative approaches to engage students' interest. For example, in a Year 8 Spanish lesson students had to repeat key words and make accompanying gestures to a steady rhythm. They enjoyed this activity and as a result consolidated their knowledge more effectively.
- Teachers use questioning well to check students' understanding and make adjustments in their lessons so that no one is left behind. In some lessons, teachers ask supplementary questions to get students to explain how they know something. This leads to deeper understanding and more rapid progress.
- Teachers generally set work which is at the right level, but some do not consistently use information about students' abilities to do so, especially for the most-able. Occasionally, they do not ask sufficiently challenging questions and, consequently, these students do not make progress as rapidly as they might.
- Teachers set regular and challenging homework which is well marked, giving students clear indications of how to improve their work. This is followed up in 'target getting tasks' where students are given time to respond to the teacher's comments. This ensures that students make the necessary improvements.
- Teachers use information about disadvantaged students and those who are disabled or have special educational needs to ensure that they make the progress of which they are capable. Additional staff are well used to support these students.
- When students enter the school in Year 7, information from the primary schools is used to give extra help to those who have not reached the expected standards in English and mathematics. As a result, almost all of these catch up by the end of the year.

- Teachers are reflective about their practice and make good use of the many opportunities to improve the quality of their teaching, particularly benefiting from links with other schools in DALP.
- Teaching of those who receive part of their education at alternative sites is good, so that those students make good progress and obtain useful qualifications.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Students benefit from the increased responsibility placed on them in smaller groups, for example, when they are called upon to make presentations from their own research.

### **The achievement of pupils is good**

- Students join the school in Year 7 with levels of attainment broadly in line with national averages. In 2013, 61% of students achieved five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics at GCSE, around the national average. In 2014 this figure rose to 68%, a significant improvement on the 2013 results and above the national average of 2013. Students also made much better progress in both English and mathematics in 2014 compared to 2013.
- Students currently in the school continue to make good progress. Reliable data seen on inspection indicate that progress in English will be even better for the current Year 11 and that progress in mathematics and other subjects is likely to be maintained.
- In general, the most-able students are achieving well with a similar proportion gaining the highest grades of A and A\* as students nationally. There were some variations between subjects in the proportions achieving the highest A\* and A grades in 2013 and 2014, students doing particularly well in science subjects, but less well in some others. Books and lesson observations indicate that the most-able students are mostly making good or better progress but it is not consistently strong across the school and different subjects.
- Those who are disabled or have special educational needs make good progress, especially in English. For those in the current Year 11, progress is continuing to improve.
- Disadvantaged students do not attain as well as their classmates, but their progress is accelerating rapidly. In 2013 they were on average a grade behind in their English GCSE results when compared to other students in the school. They were almost two grades behind in mathematics. By 2014 this gap had almost completely disappeared in English and was down to a grade in mathematics. When compared with other students nationally in 2013, this group was over a grade behind in English and nearly two grades behind in mathematics. Although there is no nationally available data for 2014 yet, it is likely that this group outperformed others nationally by half a grade in English and was less than a grade behind in mathematics.
- The school's reliable data show that disadvantaged students in the current Year 11 are making even greater progress, as are students further down the school.
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve in line with others in the school.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is well used so that almost all those who enter the school below the expected standard in English and mathematics catch up by the end of the year.
- Students are not entered early for any GCSE examinations.
- Many students take part in the wide range of sports which are on offer and the school teams have a good success record. The school regularly stages musical and theatrical productions, which involve large numbers of musicians, actors and back stage helpers, such as the forthcoming *We Will Rock You*.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good as students make good progress and leave school well prepared for

their next stage in education or employment or training.

### The sixth form provision

is good

- Leaders and managers have worked well to ensure that effective advice and guidance ensures that students follow courses which suit their aspirations and abilities. The curriculum offers two broad pathways: the academic and the vocational, although students are able to combine the two. Close links with the nearby Holgate Academy mean that a wider range of courses are offered.
- Leaders, managers and teachers have high expectations of students which lead to most making good progress. There are support programmes for the few students who do not have the expected GCSE grades in English or mathematics to enable them to catch up to the standard required.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning and are well prepared for lessons. Good teaching over time leads to good progress for students. If students are falling behind, effective support programmes are put in place to enable them to catch up.
- Students do well in their examinations, gaining results in their AS, A level and BTEC examinations in line with national averages from below average starting points. The majority of students go on to university, and, as a consequence of the good advice and guidance they receive, almost all leave school either to continue education or to take up employment or training.
- The most able are challenged to reach their full potential. There has been a steady increase in the proportions gaining the highest A\*-B grades at A level. In 2014, 46% of all entries were graded A\*-B, close to the national average. Students are encouraged to apply for Russell Group universities. In 2014, all university applicants were successful.
- The very small numbers of disadvantaged students and those who are disabled or have special educational needs achieve as well as their peers.
- Sixth formers participate fully in the life of the school, acting as mentors to younger students, running the school council and helping raise funds for charity as well as taking part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer.
- Students enjoy the extra responsibility that comes with the sixth form and respond positively to it. They actively seek out ways to support and help younger students and others beyond the school.



## 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>	137159
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	448646

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>	Non-maintained
<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>	1168
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	143
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kathryn Mitford
<b>Principal</b>	Simon Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 963 5667
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<b>Email address</b>	adminoffice@nationalce-ac.org.uk

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