

Coundon Court

Northbrook Road, Coventry, CV6 2AJ

Inspection dates 23–24 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Until recently monitoring by leaders has not yet had time to make an impact on improving teaching and learning.
- Governors are not aware that the academy's safeguarding policy does not meet the current requirements.
- There is too much low-level disruption to learning by a small group of students. A small number of students stated they do not feel safe in the academy.
- Fixed term exclusions are too high, and attendance and punctuality need to improve.
- Teaching still requires improvement because some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what students, particularly the most-able, can do.
- The effectiveness of marking varies too much. There is not enough consistently good practice across the academy.
- The proportion of students gaining five or more passes at grade C or above has improved but too few students gain higher grades, particularly in mathematics.
- The proportions of students in the sixth form making better than expected progress and gaining the higher grades at A level are too low.

The school has the following strengths

- Attainment and progress in art, music, physical education and vocational subjects at the end of Key Stage 4 and at Post 16 are high.
- Students known to be eligible for the pupil premium make better progress in English and mathematics than other students.
- Recent staff appointments have improved the quality of leadership in the mathematics and science departments.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons. Five observations were made jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors observed the behaviour of students during the school day, at break times and lunchtimes; and before and after school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, teachers with additional responsibilities, groups of students, a parent, the Chair, vice chair and one other member of the governing body.
- The views of the 74 parents who responded to the on line questionnaire (Parent View) were analysed. Inspectors took account of the views of three parents who spoke to the inspection team. The results of 138 staff questionnaires were analysed.
- Inspectors analysed the previous three years' examination results. They analysed the academy's data on the progress students have made from their starting points and their current progress.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including minutes of meetings, curriculum plans, records relating to safeguarding and behaviour and data on attendance and exclusions. They looked at the academy's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance and its improvement plan.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Full report

Information about this school

- Coundon Court converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2012. When its predecessor school, Coundon Court School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- Coundon Court is a larger than average academy, located in the north of Coventry. Students attend from within the immediate community, the city centre and from the wider surrounding areas of Coventry.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2014.
- The vast majority of students are White British. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is slightly higher than the national average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, extra funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children, is just below the national average.
- The academy uses Coombe Abbey for its alternative provision.
- The academy has gained a number of awards including Arts Mark Gold and a pupil premium award in 2013.
- The governing body manages childcare provision in the Coundon Court Early Years Centre. This was not inspected at this time.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the safeguarding policy meets current requirements and that staff are provided with regular training to ensure they are aware of any changes in requirements.
- Ensure that attendance and punctuality improves through senior leaders ensuring their monitoring information about different groups of students is used to reduce persistent absences.
- Ensure greater consistency of good and better teaching across the main school and raise the achievement of all students, in particular the most-able, by:
 - using information about students' starting points to plan challenging work that interests and engages them
 - making sure that the best practice in marking is adopted across the academy
- Eradicate low level disruption in classes by ensuring that all staff make effective use of the behaviour policy and reward system.
- Improve teaching in the sixth form so that it is consistently good or better and the standards achieved in academic subjects improve to that of the vocational subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The new headteacher has an accurate view of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. He has high aspirations for all students. Academy improvement plans reflect clear vision and ambition. Staff are very positive about the new headteacher and the direction in which the academy is now going. However, the headteacher has not had time to implement all the changes necessary. He has strengthened his inexperienced leadership team by bringing in four seconded middle leaders and by re-grouping senior teams so that more experienced staff can support more recently appointed colleagues. Senior leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- Until recently monitoring of teaching did not take sufficient account of the need for students to make better than expected progress. The newly introduced tracking system is helping staff to set more aspirational targets for students. Students' progress is measured from their starting points on entry to the academy and all are expected to make at least expected progress in all of their subjects. Senior leaders can clearly identify students and subjects where there is underachievement. They have begun to hold staff to account for raising standards but it is too early to see any measurable impact.
- Senior and middle leaders monitor the achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium and hold staff to account for their progress.
- The performance management system is under review. Feedback from last year's newly qualified staff has helped leaders to make improvements to the performance management of staff this year.
- Alternative provision is monitored carefully. Students' attendance, progress, and their views on their learning are checked regularly.
- Students are positive about the new headteacher. They stated that he was out of his office and around the academy, visiting lessons and present at break and lunchtimes.
- Leaders have completed a detailed analysis of external examination results and compared them to their expectations for students. Leaders check that assessments made by teachers measure students' progress accurately.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Students are encouraged to understand democracy, tolerance, mutual respect and British values.
- Leaders and governors were not aware that some aspects of the academy's safeguarding policy do not meet the current requirements. For example that staff should read key parts of recent official guidance. Staff understand the academy's procedures and identify any student who may be at risk. Safeguarding arrangements for students attending off-site provision are appropriate.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are unaware of the need for the safeguarding policy to be updated. Nevertheless, they are well informed about individual safeguarding incidents.
 - In all other aspects, the governing body has a broadly accurate view of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. It has re-shaped its committee structure to hold the leaders to account more rigorously. A strategic group enables governors to be more responsive to the needs of the academy should a crisis occur.
 - Governors confidently challenge senior leaders and hold them to account. They have a wide range of information which they use to evaluate the academy's performance. They take careful account of how extra funding is spent in supporting students who are eligible for pupil premium funding and those with special educational needs or disabilities. Governors are aware that the academy's data indicate that by the end of 2014 students known to be eligible for free school meals made better progress than other groups.
 - Governors ensure that all financial matters are managed efficiently.

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

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. This is because in some subjects a small number of students' poor attitudes to learning disrupt the learning of others. Not all students walk purposefully to lessons at the end of break. Some dawdle and are late. In a small number of lessons, students stop working too early and waste time waiting for the bell. The headteacher has identified this on his walks around the academy and plans to introduce a warning bell to alert students to the need to be in class.
- Both staff and parents reported concerns about low-level disruption in lessons. This behaviour is often as a result of teaching not being matched well to the needs of students and work that is not sufficiently demanding. However, students stated that, since the appointment of the new headteacher, behaviour in lessons and around the academy has begun to improve.
- An analysis of students' behaviour has led to the implementation of a new reward system that is beginning to have a positive impact. This is not applied consistently by all staff however.
- The majority of students are courteous to each other, staff and visitors. Relationships between staff and students are good. However, some students show a marked lack of awareness of others when opening doors; they do not hold them open routinely for the next person.
- Students told inspectors that if they had a problem they could talk to a range of staff they trusted. Bullying and racism are rare and students believe any incidents are tackled quickly. Students stated that inappropriate language was sometimes used.
- Students learn about keeping safe from extremism, substance abuse or gangs in lessons.
- Sixth form students commented that they feel safe in lessons and that an atmosphere of trust exists between them and staff.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement.
- A small number of students stated they did not feel safe in the academy. The headteacher has re-positioned staff at break times so that more remote parts of the site are checked regularly. Students are aware of how to keep themselves safe when using social media.
- Attendance is slowly improving and is similar to the national average. Punctuality is also improving. The rate of persistent absence for some groups of students is above the national average. The academy has appointed its own education welfare officer who has just begun to tackle the reasons for this. Fixed term exclusions have begun to decline.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Teaching is too variable across the academy. In weaker lessons teachers' expectations are too low and the classwork does not challenge the most-able students enough. This limits the development of their skills and understanding. Some teachers do not use information about students' progress to identify quickly those who need greater support or challenge.
- Some teachers use questioning effectively to deepen students' thinking about complex issues. However, teachers do not always change what they have planned to do in the light of students' responses. This prevents students from making as much progress as they could.
- In some lessons students copy information from work sheets rather than analysing it to develop their own ideas or to solve problems. Consequently, this limits their understanding.

- In the best lessons teachers’ plan effectively and brief teaching assistants well so that they work productively to support students. For example, in a mathematics lesson the teacher’s planning of small steps in learning helped a lower attaining set remain on task and build their confidence. Teaching assistants encouraged students to think about their answers and to remain engaged in their learning.
- In English, science, and in design and technology, technical vocabulary is emphasised well and teachers remind students to use technical terms in their answers. This improves the clarity and precision of students’ oral and written answers. It also helps students to read additional information with greater understanding.
- In personal, social and health education students are encouraged to think about current moral issues. The school’s links with other countries, such as China, ensure students develop positive views of different cultures. Students develop good social skills when working in groups. They know how to work collaboratively and willingly help each other to learn.
- In some lessons, teachers use seating plans which identify students eligible for the pupil premium and with special educational needs or disabilities, to check that they meet individual students’ needs. For example, they provide extra resources to those who need them to complete homework.
- The information from the baseline testing of reading is used well by some teachers to choose texts best matched to improve students’ reading.
- The quality of marking and written feedback to students is too variable. Some teachers use the academy’s system effectively to comment succinctly on what students do well. They also provide a learning challenge to which students respond and so improves their learning. In art, staff and students work together enabling learning to be matched to the needs of each student. As a result students made gains in their understanding beyond their target grades. However, some marking does not ensure that students address poor spelling or grammar and misconceptions are not corrected.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2014 at the end of Key Stage 4, the academy’s unvalidated results indicate that 68% of Year 11 students gained five A*-C grades, including English and mathematics. This is an improvement on the previous year’s result.
- Students’ attainment in English and mathematics was above the national average. In science, modern foreign languages, history, geography, design, and technology students’ attainment was broadly in line with the respective national averages. The new headteacher has begun to tackle any weaknesses in these areas. He has set challenging targets for next year.
- Most students make the progress that is expected but too few students make good progress in all subjects.
- The gap in attainment between Year 11 students eligible for the pupil premium and non-pupil premium students is reducing. Eligible students are approximately a term behind their peers in English and mathematics.
- The Year 7 catch-up programme is helping students make accelerated progress in reading and mathematics because the additional support they receive is effective.
- Students in Years 7 and 8 who need additional help in English receive effective support from the learning support department. This work successfully addresses weaknesses in the students’ reading and writing. An accelerated reading programme is improving the reading skills of targeted students in Years 7 and 8.
- Students who speak English as an additional language consistently make better progress than other

students in both English and mathematics. This is because carefully designed support meets their individual needs.

- The progress of students with special educational needs is improving. Students who attend alternative provision make at least the progress that is expected. This is because well designed programmes capture their interest and keep them engaged with learning.
- The academy's policy for early entry GCSE English and mathematics has had mixed results. Those taking English improved their grades when they were re-entered. There was minimal benefit for those who took mathematics early.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Teaching in the sixth form has begun to improve particularly for academic subjects but is not yet good. Teachers are making better use of information about students' starting points to inform their planning and to devise activities that provide greater challenge for all groups of students.
- Students' attainment and progress in vocational subjects are of a high standard. However, attainment in subjects at both AS and A level is broadly in line with the national averages. The majority of students make expected progress in subjects at both AS and A levels but too few make better than expected progress.
- The recently appointed head of the sixth form has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and other post 16 provision. He has an appropriate action plan to address priorities in particular improving teaching in academic subjects. He has begun to monitor teaching systematically and to hold teachers to account for the progress of students in all courses.
- The sixth form curriculum meets the requirements for 16-19 study skills, and equips students well for life after school. Consequently, every student who leaves at the end of Key Stages 5 goes into employment, training or further study. The enrichment courses in particular provide students with skills that are attractive to future employers. Advice and guidance to students has improved and students are selecting courses better matched to their capabilities and interests.
- Post 16 students behave well in lessons and around the academy. The programme of enrichment activities provides opportunities for some students to assist in lessons. In a Key Stage 3 music lesson observed, a sixth former helped students understand and concentrate on their performance skills. In providing support to younger students sixth formers develop their leadership skills.
- Sixth formers understand about safe behaviours and the need to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They stated they were well educated in different aspects of safety.

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	138023
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	448632

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1683
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Payne
Headteacher	Andrew Clay
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	024 76335121
Fax number	024 76336842
Email address	admin@coundoncourt.org

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