

City of Derby Academy

Farmhouse Road, Sinfin, Derby, DE24 3AR

Inspection dates 8–9 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Recent improvements made by academy leaders have not yet had enough time to make sure that all students make good progress. This means that students' attainment, whilst rising, remains below the national average.
- The quality of teaching, although improving, remains too variable, and is not yet consistently good.
- Sometimes, teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are not high enough, so students do not make as much progress as they should.
- Teachers do not always closely match the work that they set to the different abilities of the students in each class.
- Although some teachers' marking is of high quality, students do not consistently get clear feedback on how they can improve their work. Teachers do not always check that students have acted on the advice given in marking.
- Teachers do not always check how well students are learning in lessons. This means they do not adapt their teaching to make sure that all students make good progress.
- Sometimes teaching does not engage the interest of the small number of students in Key Stage 3 who find it more difficult to concentrate on their work.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the school became an academy, the quality of teaching has improved and, as a result, students' rates of progress are increasing rapidly.
- Students' attendance has improved, and is now above the national average.
- Students are proud of their academy. It is a calm and orderly place where students work hard, behave well and feel safe.
- The academy's curriculum promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The Principal has acted effectively to raise the quality of teaching by eliminating any inadequate practice. He has clear plans to improve the academy further.
- The academy sponsor provides high-quality support and rigorous challenge to leaders and teachers. This has enabled the academy to improve rapidly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students' learning in 40 lessons across all year groups. Seven observations were made jointly with senior leaders. The work in a sample of students' books was evaluated. Inspectors attended two assemblies and a number of tutor periods.
- The inspection team observed the behaviour of students in lessons, during lesson changeovers, at break and lunchtimes, and as they left the academy premises.
- Inspectors looked at the results of the academy's own questionnaire given to parents as there were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, for these to be taken into account by inspectors. Inspectors also took account of the 47 staff questionnaires they received.
- Meetings were held with the Principal; academy leaders, including heads of subject and the special educational needs coordinator; and with representatives of the academy sponsor, the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust. These included meetings with the Executive Principal, the Education Director and the Chief Executive of the trust board.
- Inspectors met formally with four groups of students of different ages and backgrounds. They also had a number of informal discussions with students around the academy at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at important documents, including examination results and the academy's own records of students' progress. They scrutinised the academy's policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection. Inspectors examined records of students' attendance and behaviour, the academy's plans for improvement and documents used by leaders to check the quality of the work of staff at the academy.

Inspection team

Michael Phipps, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Richard Cox	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector
Kim Bower	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The City of Derby Academy converted to become an academy on 1 June 2013. It is sponsored by the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust. When its predecessor school, Sinfin Community School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require special measures.
- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, at just over a half of all students, is much higher than average. The largest groups of students are of Indian, Romany and Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language, at almost a half of all students, is much higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, at almost one quarter of students, is slightly higher than average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, at around half of all students, is much higher than average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for students in the care of the local authority and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Ten students in Key Stage 4 and two in Key Stage 3 attend work-related courses away from the school site, at the Derby Pride Academy; Kingsmead School; and Rathbone Derby, a youth charity providing work-related training.
- In 2014, the academy did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or better, in order that all students make rapid progress, by making sure that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve, so that they learn quickly and achieve more in lessons
 - all teachers' marking is as good as the best in giving students clear guidance on how to improve their work, and that teachers check students have acted on this advice
 - teachers set work which matches the range of students' ability in every class, including the most able and those who find learning more difficult
 - all teachers regularly check how well students are learning in lessons, and modify their teaching in line with students' understanding
 - teaching always engages the interest of all students, especially the small number in Key Stage 3 who find it more difficult to concentrate.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Academy leaders have succeeded in making key improvements to the quality of teaching, students' achievement and their behaviour. They still must ensure that teaching is consistently good and that students catch up fully on previously lost ground.
- The Principal, well supported by an effective leadership team, has a clear, shared vision of how to develop the academy, and an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. Plans for improvement are well organised and focus on the right areas.
- Leaders carry out regular checks on the quality of teachers' work. Teachers are set targets based on students' progress. Any underperformance in teaching is tackled robustly, and inadequate teaching has been eliminated. Teachers have good opportunities to improve their skills. As a result, the quality of teaching continues to improve.
- Checks are made on students' progress each half term, and teachers are then held to account in meetings with academy leaders. Opportunities are provided for students to catch up if they fall behind.
- Teachers in charge of subjects take responsibility for improving teaching and for the progress that students make in their subjects. They are playing a growing role in improving the academy.
- The curriculum is broad and provides a good balance of academic and work-related courses. It is well matched to students' interests and abilities, and provides opportunities for them to develop literacy and numeracy skills. High-quality careers advice and guidance is available in all year groups. The academy is using former National Curriculum levels while it develops its preferred approach to assessment.
- The curriculum promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through a programme of assemblies and special events, and through well-planned provision in citizenship and personal, social and health education. As a result, students develop a respect for, and understanding of, different faiths, cultures and lifestyles. This means they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Students enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities.
- School leaders spend additional funds from the pupil premium appropriately. This includes spending on support in mathematics and English, particularly in reading, for disadvantaged students, and on staff mentors. This spending is beginning to close the gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students and others.
- Leaders check the progress, behaviour and attendance of students who study in alternative provision away from the academy site. There is a good working partnership with these providers so these students achieve in line with their abilities.
- The school does not tolerate discrimination and is committed to making sure that all students have an equal chance to succeed.
- Leaders are building good relationships with parents. Parents' confidence in the academy is demonstrated by the increasing numbers of students who want to join in Year 7.
- Leaders' capacity to improve the academy further is good, as indicated by the record of improvement since the academy opened. Leaders are successfully creating a culture in which effective teaching and good behaviour can flourish.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the academy is good. Members of the academy trust have high expectations of what leaders should achieve and ask them searching questions. Representatives from the trust board,

especially the Executive Principal, are frequent visitors to the academy so they have an accurate understanding of its strengths, how good teaching is, how any underperformance in teaching is challenged, how well students achieve and which areas need improvement. As a result of this rigorous challenge, the academy is improving rapidly.

- The trust makes sure that the academy's finances are managed well. Trust members know how additional funding such as the pupil premium is spent, and its impact on the achievement of disadvantaged students. They make sure that teachers' salary progression depends on the progress their students make.
- The trust provides excellent support for the academy's leaders and makes sure that the academy meets all statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils **are good**

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students are punctual to lessons, and arrive ready to work with the correct equipment. They told inspectors that learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour, and academy records confirm this. Students identified the improvement in behaviour as the biggest change they had noticed since the school became an academy.
- Students conduct themselves well around the academy between lessons, at breaks and lunchtimes, and when they learn with alternative providers. There is very little litter or graffiti around the academy site. Students wear their smart uniforms with pride.
- Almost all students work hard, enjoy learning and take pride in their well-presented work. They respond quickly to teachers' instructions, and work well together.
- Parents have no concerns about the behaviour of students.
- A small number of students in Key Stage 3 lose focus in some lessons when the teaching does not engage their interest. When this happens, although they cause no disruption, these students make slower progress than they could.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Entry into the academy is secure, and visitors are checked carefully. All necessary checks are made on staff before appointment. Procedures for keeping students safe are good, including when they study at alternative provision.
- Students told inspectors they feel safe. They have a very good awareness of different types of bullying, such as cyber-bullying and racist bullying, but say it is very rare. If it did happen, they are confident it would stop if they told an adult.
- Students are taught well how to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding, for example, of safety when using the internet. Students told inspectors that all groups of students get on well together, and that racism is almost unknown.
- Students' attendance has risen and is now above the national average. The number of students who are frequently absent from school has fallen.

The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, although improving, remains variable. It is not yet consistently good. Since the academy opened, it has not been good enough to produce good achievement in literacy, reading and mathematics, where standards are not yet high enough.
- Sometimes teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are not high enough, and the level of

challenge in lessons is not sufficient to make students think hard. On occasions, students do not learn enough and do not complete enough work in lessons.

- Although some teachers' marking is of high quality, marking is not consistently good across the academy. This means that students do not always get clear feedback in all subjects on how they can improve their work. Not all teachers make sure that students have acted on this advice.
- Teachers do not always match work to the different abilities of all students. More-able students are not always given work difficult enough to extend their thinking, and students who find learning difficult are not always given enough help.
- Teachers do not always check how well students are learning in lessons by, for example, asking questions to check what students understand. This means that teachers do not adapt their teaching by, for instance, explaining to all students a point which has not been well understood.
- Sometimes teaching does not engage the interest all students, especially the small number of students in Key Stage 3 who find it more difficult to concentrate. This means they lose focus and make slower progress.
- Teachers' assessment of students' work and progress is regular and accurate, and is supported by internal academy and external checking.
- Relationships between teachers and students are warm and respectful. Teachers are enthusiastic, plan learning well, have a good knowledge of their subjects, and know how to make learning fun. As a result, almost all students respond well in lessons and want to do well.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students join the academy with standards in English and mathematics which are well below average. Despite recent improvements to the quality of teaching, too many students are still not making good progress. In 2014, the proportion of students achieving five or more A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics was well below the national average.
- In 2014, the proportion of students who made or exceeded the progress expected of them in mathematics was well below average. The proportion gaining a grade C or better at GCSE in mathematics in 2014 was similarly well below average. Recent changes in staffing have improved the quality of teaching in mathematics. As a result, students' progress in this subject is now more rapid.
- Students' achievement in English in 2014 was well below the national average and some students do not make the progress they should. Standards of literacy are variable, but they are improving. Teachers in all subjects now specifically plan how to develop students' reading, writing and communication skills.
- The achievement of the academy's most-able students requires improvement, particularly in mathematics, where too few make the good progress expected of them. The proportions of students achieving the highest grades at GCSE in most subjects are very low.
- In 2014, students eligible for the pupil premium were more than one GCSE grade below others in the academy in both mathematics and English. Compared to other students nationally, the academy's disadvantaged students are more than one and a half GCSE grades behind in both English and mathematics. Academy data and inspectors' checks both confirm that disadvantaged students are now making faster progress than in the past, so gaps in attainment are narrowing, and are on course to close further by the end of 2015.
- In 2014, the academy entered some students early for GCSE examinations in mathematics. Although students had the chance to retake these examinations to try to gain a higher grade, too few of the academy's more-able students made the good progress that was expected of them in mathematics, and

few gained the highest GCSE grades.

- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. The education provided by the school meets their specific learning needs. They are supported in lessons by teaching assistants, and a range of additional help is provided outside lessons.
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve results which are generally in line with that of other students. Students of Romany heritage achieve particularly well in comparison to similar students nationally. Students who speak English as an additional language are adequately supported so they make similar progress to their peers.
- Leaders make appropriate use of the additional 'catch up' funding for students who join the academy in Year 7 with the lowest starting points. Targeted spending ensures these students begin to catch up in English and mathematics.
- Students achieve well in work-related courses in the academy, particularly in science, sport, information and communications technology, health and social care, and motor vehicle maintenance. Students who attend alternative provision achieve results in work-related courses which are in line with their abilities.
- In a number of subjects, students achieve well and reach standards that are in line with the national average. They make particularly good progress in science and citizenship.
- As a result of improved teaching and accurate checks, students' progress is improving rapidly. The academy's own data on current students indicate their achievement in all subjects is on course to rise in 2015, and this more rapid progress and higher attainment is set to continue. Checks made by inspectors confirm that rates of progress are now faster than in the recent past.

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 students' needs. This ensures that students 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 students' needs. Students 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 students 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	139564
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	449825

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	758
Appropriate authority	The Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust
Chief Executive	Sir Barry Day
Principal	Howard Jones
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01332 270450
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