

# Sir Christopher Hatton Academy

The Pyghle, Wellingborough, NN8 4RP

**Inspection dates** 8–9 January 2015

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- The academy does a superb job. It ensures that when students leave, they are extremely well equipped to take their place in society as young adults.
- Leaders have established highly effective systems for checking and improving the quality of teaching and achievement. As a result both are excellent.
- Students' GCSE results have been outstanding since the academy opened.
- Teachers make sure that work is carefully matched to what students need to learn. As a result all ability groups make very rapid progress.
- Teachers keep a close eye on how well everyone is doing to make sure rapid progress continues throughout lessons.
- The academy makes sure its systems for keeping students safe meet national requirements and are effective. Students feel very safe. They say that they could immediately get help if needed.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. They concentrate extremely well and confidently ask questions to clarify key points in their learning.
- The Executive Principal provides top class leadership and is very well supported by other leaders. They show no sign of complacency, and are continually trying to improve the students' education.
- Leaders know exactly what has to be done to maintain the academy's many strengths and improve the very few areas that are not yet outstanding.
- The comparatively small sixth form is good. It is improving very rapidly. Students do especially well in work-related learning, but achievement is not yet consistently high across different A-level subjects.
- Governors are very effective. They recognise how well the academy is doing, but continue to challenge leaders to further improve teaching and achievement.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited lessons in a wide range of subjects, covering all year groups. These visits varied in length. Some were brief and focused on checking the learning of specific groups of students; the longer observations were designed to look at how learning was developed over the course of the lesson.
- Inspectors studied students' books and their work in lessons. They talked to students about their work. They talked to students informally and in a series of planned meetings, and listened to some students reading.
- They held discussions with the Executive Principal, other senior and middle leaders, and other staff. The Lead inspector also met with a group of governors, including the Chair of the Board of Directors.
- The inspectors studied 63 questionnaires returned by staff and the 43 responses on the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also took into account the 756 responses to the academy's recent questionnaire in order to gauge parents' opinions of their children's education.
- Inspectors also looked at a wide range of academy documents and data, such as records about behaviour, attendance and progress.

## Inspection team

Deborah Zachary, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Thornalley	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector
David New	Additional Inspector
Helen Bailey	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Sir Christopher Hatton Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 March 2012. When its predecessor school, Sir Christopher Hatton School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.
- The academy is the lead school in a multi-academy trust, formed in January 2014 to facilitate the academy's sponsorship of two local primary schools. The Executive Principal and other staff are providing support to these schools.
- The academy is larger than the average secondary school. Its sixth form is below average in size.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by pupil premium funding, at around 24%, is broadly average.
- The majority of students (about 60%) are of White British heritage. A wide range of ethnic groups are represented in the academy. The largest minority ethnic groups are from Indian (7%) and Other White (also 7%) backgrounds.
- An above-average proportion, about 17%, of the students speak English as an additional language.
- About 20% of the students are disabled or have special educational needs. This is broadly average.
- Currently six students spend part of the week studying at a range of alternative providers: Complementary Education, Key Training, Moulton College, On Track, and Rushmere Academy.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

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

- Raise academic achievement in the sixth form by ensuring that students' progress is consistently at, or above, the national average in all subjects and courses.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Executive Principal provides exceptional leadership. She has led the academy on a remarkable journey of improvement and is supported extremely well by a highly effective team of senior leaders. Very good systems ensure excellence in teaching, academic achievement, behaviour and pastoral care. One teacher's comment typified the views expressed to inspectors: 'I am proud of what we do as a body and how we do it'.
- Middle leaders, such as those in charge of subjects, also provide excellent leadership, checking on the work of colleagues and planning for improvement. Should results in any subject dip, they take action immediately, analysing feedback from the examination board and making effective changes to ensure improvement. The middle leaders who recently joined the academy received a detailed induction and are very positive about the support they have had from senior colleagues.
- Leaders' own evaluation of how well the academy is doing is highly accurate, and leads to very effective plans for change and development. For example, very capable leadership of the sixth form led to a very rapid rise in results between 2013 and 2014.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching extremely carefully, and take highly effective action to raise teaching standards. Support for staff is tailored to their individual levels of expertise. Teachers do not receive pay rises unless these are warranted by the progress of the students they teach. Teaching staff feel thoroughly supported by the attitudes of leaders and appreciate the opportunities they are given to sharpen their skills. As a result they implement academy strategies, for example the policies to ensure good behaviour and the requirements for very effective marking, with consistency and commitment.
- Relationships between adults and students are excellent throughout the academy community. Staff are alert and ready to combat discrimination, and the academy promotes equal opportunities very effectively. For example, pupil premium funds are used very well to support the specific needs of individuals, and in addition, funds are available for departments to bid for, to be used for special projects. The impact of all such funding is closely monitored and recorded by leaders. It has ensured strong improvement in the performance of disadvantaged students.
- The decision to enable a student to attend alternative provision outside the academy is only taken after a detailed review of the students' needs. The academy liaises very closely with providers to check that students are attending and that their progress and improvements to behaviour demonstrate that the placement remains the right one. The coordinator for alternative provision maintains personal contact with the students throughout their placement.
- The subjects and courses on offer are carefully structured to ensure that students of different abilities and aptitudes have the opportunities they need. In Key Stage 4, for example, four possible pathways are available. The most able students are required to follow a route containing highly academic subjects, including a language. Other groups take work-related courses that operate in tandem with courses leading to essential academic qualifications. Leaders use a comprehensive system to track the experiences of students on the different courses and ensure that both the formal curriculum and enhancement activities give students excellent qualifications and skills for the future.
- Students are extremely well prepared for life in modern Britain. A wide programme of personal education ensures they understand and can reflect on moral dilemmas and fundamental British values. Specific units of work ensure students develop their understanding of these issues very well. For example, Year 10 students look at different legal systems, including Sharia Law. Assemblies are often based on topical matters. During the inspection, sixth form students discussed views about future employment of those convicted of sexual offences.
- Detailed checks ensure that every subject contributes to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors saw students producing a wide variety of imaginative and creative work, not just in art but also in a range of other subjects, that encouraged students to think deeply about the

significance of the topics they were studying.

- A very well-organised careers programme ensures that students of all abilities get impartial advice about the future. For example, careers days involve a very large number of external employers, and students intending to follow post-16 studies receive practical and effective guidance about courses. This is one reason why very few students drop out of courses in the academy's sixth form. In 2014 the academy was successful in ensuring that all post-16 students went into education, employment or training.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is very effective. Governors may be members of the multi-academy trust board and/or the more specific academy committee, but at both levels are very well aware of what is happening in the academy. They also understand the boundaries to their role - for example that the day-to-day running of the academy is the responsibility of the headteacher.
- Governors understand the use of data about students' performance and evaluate policies and procedures carefully to determine their impact. They challenge the Executive Principal and senior managers but also appreciate the high quality of the staff. They have detailed knowledge of the quality of teaching, and know its strengths in general as well as the relative performance of staff, including those in different subject areas. They know what is being done to improve teaching, and reward it where it is good or outstanding.
- Governors bring a wide range of skills to their role and are well aware of the need to maintain training, for example about child protection. They ensure that the academy's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements and are effective.
- They also keep a close check on the academy's finances. They take responsibility for long-term planning, for example over the purchase of additional accommodation and in ensuring that staff are prepared to take over key posts if necessary.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. They clearly understand the procedures to encourage good behaviour, and those who spoke to inspectors were extremely positive about how well the system works.
- Students concentrate exceptionally well in lessons and often take the initiative by asking the teacher to expand or explain something further. They can work alone, in silence, or work in groups or with a partner, listening carefully to each other's views. They are well aware of what they are aiming for and how to get there, and do their utmost to achieve it. Instances of inattentiveness or lack of commitment are rare. In questionnaires returned by teachers and teaching assistants, all agreed or strongly agreed that behaviour is good.
- Outside lessons, students also conduct themselves in an exemplary way. They are very clear about the rules, for example for movement time between lessons. They queue in an orderly manner and are polite to each other at all times, even on occasions when many are gathered together in one area. Students who spoke to inspectors about their experiences in the academy were courteous, at ease and articulate.
- Students who sometimes show challenging behaviour are identified early and given strong support to improve. This includes advice on anger management, which older students described as very effective. The number of exclusions from the academy has been reduced in the past two years.
- The academy liaises closely with providers of alternative education. It works with them to ensure that the placements are effective in stabilising and improving both behaviour and attendance.
- Parents are very happy with behaviour in the academy. In the academy's own questionnaire, 96% of parents felt students were well behaved. In the much smaller response to the online questionnaire, only four parents disagreed.

#### Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students say they feel safe and 99% of parents who responded to the academy's survey agreed. Only two parents who gave their views to the team online had reservations.
- Students understand about different types of bullying, and are adamant that staff quickly tackle any hint of it. They say that students are confident that they can be open about their sexuality, and that any homophobic language is immediately challenged.
- Older students, particularly those in the sixth form, are very well aware of potential dangers of radicalisation. They understand the difference between religious belief and extremism, and value the opportunities provided for education and debate around these matters.
- Students also understand their responsibility to keep each other safe. Older students are aware, for example, that a teenager might be 'groomed' by adults outside the academy. They are very clear that if they suspected that this was happening and could not help a friend by talking to them, then they would tell an adult.
- When a student starts to attend alternative provision, the academy's thorough liaison with the provider ensures that they settle well. The academy fully recognises its responsibility to keep a check on the safety of these students, and continues to do so throughout the student's time in the provision.
- Attendance is above average, and absences are closely monitored. The academy takes strong action on any persistent absence.

### The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teachers have a detailed understanding of the capabilities of the students they teach, and any specific support they may need. Even within classes that have a restricted range of abilities, teachers are aware of those who might need extra challenge or help and they provide support, for example through prompts to help students structure their writing. They challenge students of all abilities to learn rapidly in lessons.
- Teachers not only think about what students of different abilities need to learn, but also keep a watchful eye on individuals during lessons and move quickly to provide further challenge or guidance when needed. For example, in a Year 8 geography lesson, where students were learning about which countries imprison the most citizens, the teacher pushed the most able students, who had completed the initial analysis, to think about why the pattern might be there. As a result they went beyond the more obvious idea that more prisoners might be due to more crime and began to consider whether it might also be due to better detection in some countries, relating this to economic development.
- A combination of this challenging work and interesting material means that in most lessons students maintain a high level of engagement in what they are learning about. For example, in a Spanish lesson, Year 8 students were enthusiastically reading slips of paper that described in Spanish what they might be doing at different times of the day, and putting them into the right order. In a science lesson, Year 7 students were completely engrossed watching the screen as they counted the gas bubbles that were rapidly being produced during a simulation of photosynthesis.
- Teachers are alert to any understanding and misconceptions. In a sixth form history lesson the teacher realised that students were assuming that blocks on a plan of workers' houses represented a single house. When he pointed out that each was two houses made of a single room, there was a collective intake of breath as students' recognised their previous misunderstanding.
- Teachers extend students' knowledge rapidly through very skilful questioning. They listen to what a student says and use their high levels of subject knowledge to unpick students' thinking and take their understanding further. Students are expected to contribute answers and ideas, and do so well. Teachers insist on full answers to questions, both written and spoken, and this insistence has a very positive impact on students' writing.

- Reading is also taught very effectively. Students are given specific teaching about letters and sounds where needed, and those who read to inspectors showed that this has been very effective. All students in Key Stage 3 read once a day in class at a set time no matter what subject lesson they are in, and which changes from week to week to cover all subjects. A questionnaire designed by the academy to evaluate this initiative has shown that students appreciate the help this gives them. Tests on the reading skills of Year 7 and Year 8 students, carried out twice yearly, show excellent gains.
- Teaching assistants play an effective part in students' learning. In mathematics, for example, they play a key role, moving around the room to check understanding. Teachers and teaching assistants very effectively encourage students of all abilities to understand the reasoning behind the mathematics they are taught. However, where needed, students' understanding is strengthened by teachers summarising methods into simple steps. For example, a teacher helped Year 11 students to remember to draw long enough lines, when working with bearings, with the phrase 'long it out'. A student later commented: 'I was getting confused, but now she has put up the rules I am confident.'
- Students find teachers' feedback and marking particularly useful. Teachers correct spellings across the curriculum, and in many subjects students copy and learn new spellings as a matter of routine. Teachers not only correct and check work frequently but also provide individual questions for further work, which most students act on. Students' work shows that they are making outstanding progress through the year.

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Attainment in GCSE examinations is above average. Students enter Year 7 with attainment that is below average and make outstanding progress. A high proportion of students exceed the progress expected nationally in English and in mathematics.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve outstandingly well. Students who need specific help, such as with reading, spelling or mathematics, receive it as soon as they arrive in the academy. They have individual plans showing exactly what they need to improve on to catch up, and make very rapid progress as a result of the support given. The academy carefully assesses any additional needs that students might have, for example difficulties related to visual impairment, and draws on help from appropriate specialists to train staff.
- There is no difference in the achievement of students from different ethnic groups. Teachers know which students speak English as an additional language, and pay close attention to ensuring they develop their vocabulary, especially their use of subject-specific language. GCSE results show that the students who speak English as an additional language made progress that was much better than that made by this group nationally.
- Disadvantaged students in the sixth form achieve as well as other students. Disadvantaged students in Year 11 do not reach standards as high as other students nationally, but the gap is closing very quickly because of the steps the academy is taking to help them catch up. The gap halved in 2014. Current students, taking GCSE exams in 2015 are on track to reach standards that are closer still. Disadvantaged students in Key Stage 3 are making progress in English and mathematics that is equally as rapid or is better than that of other groups.
- In 2014, the English and mathematics GCSE results of disadvantaged students were less than half a grade behind other students nationally. Their progress was close to the national average, and their results were about at the same level as all students nationally. Though they were five sixths of a grade behind their classmates in both subjects, their classmates' results were much higher than the national average. The most able disadvantaged students did extremely well in English, with more reaching A and A\* grades than other students nationally.
- The most able students make excellent progress, and a high proportion achieve A or A\* grades in GCSE English and mathematics. They are closely tracked from the time they enter the academy. They are often challenged by the provision of more demanding work in class that has been specifically designed for them, and they are encouraged to aim high by special activities such as university visits or talks by visiting

professionals. About 70% of the students who left the sixth form in 2014 went on to university.

- The academy enters students early for GCSE examinations in English and mathematics, and has also been entering them early for religious education. The practice of early entry for religious education has been reviewed and will no longer operate for students currently making option choices. The early entry in English and mathematics is a very carefully considered policy, with views sought from parents and students and fully supported by governors. It is not limiting the progress of students of any abilities, including the most able, because any student who does not reach their very challenging target retakes the examination in the summer of Year 11.
- The 2014 nationally published data for schools' performance are based on the grades gained in the first examination taken, and do not include retakes. When the outcomes of re-takes are taken into account, the profile of students' achievement is considerably better.
- The very small number of students who attend alternative provision away from the academy make improved progress. They gain GCSEs in key subjects and are prepared for post-16 qualifications or employment, for example through a football apprenticeship course.

### The sixth form provision

is good

- The sixth form is improving rapidly. A-level achievement was very much better in 2014 than in 2013 and is now good overall. Students achieve well on academic courses such as A and AS levels, and extremely well on work-related courses. Provision for the most able students is improving, and an increasing proportion of students are moving on to the prestigious 'Russell group' universities. Most of the students who started without a GCSE grade C in English achieved it during the sixth form years, and almost all did so in mathematics.
- Students' attendance is high. Those who spoke to inspectors were extremely positive about their experiences. They find teachers' advice very useful and speak of their targets as challenging but achievable. They feel very safe in the academy – one jokingly referred to it as 'Fort Knox'. They are very clear that they can go to any staff for advice and help if needed.
- Behaviour is outstanding, as is students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The life skills programme followed by all sixth formers is exceptional. Students' punctuality to lessons and assemblies is very good. Sixth form students contribute to the academy community in a wide range of ways, including working with younger students to raise literacy levels.
- During the inspection, inspectors saw exceptional learning in some subjects. Students show high levels of concentration and readily work with others to help them understand. They say that teachers always challenge them to reach high standards. Inspectors saw many examples of teachers challenging students to think deeply. Teaching is good and rapidly improving.
- Leadership of the sixth form is very effective, and this is demonstrated by the improvements that have taken place. Every teacher of sixth form students has a performance management target related to their students' progress. Leaders track students' attainment and progress very well and take action on any emerging underperformance.
- Leaders are aware that although achievement is outstanding in some areas, it not yet consistently good or better across every subject. This lack of consistency is the reason why the sixth form effectiveness is not as exceptional as that of the academy overall. Sixth form and subject leaders are taking action to raise standards where needed. Students' current work shows increasingly rapid progress, but this has yet to be converted into higher A-level results.

## 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>	137912
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	453310

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>	Academy converter
<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>	1124
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	143
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Francis (Chair of Hatton Academies Trust Board of Directors) Fergus Macdonald (Chair of Sir Christopher Hatton Academy Committee)
<b>Principal</b>	Victoria Bishop (Executive Principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected as an academy
<b>Telephone number</b>	01933 226077
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