

Ashby School

Nottingham Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, LE65 1DT

Inspection dates 4–5 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Sixth form provision	Good		2
Overall effectiveness of the boarding experience	Outstanding		1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Good teaching ensures that students make good progress across a wide range of GCSE subjects, particularly mathematics and science.
- Teachers have a good understanding of their subject areas and are often effective in making students enthusiastic about their learning.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the two academy sites. Students say they enjoy being at the academy and feel safe. Parents agree.
- Students enjoy a wide range of extra sporting, musical and artistic trips and activities.
- The academy meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools. Most aspects of the boarding provision are outstanding.
- Sixth-form students make good progress in many subjects, especially those studying work-related options. Effective actions taken by leaders to address underperformance in a few subjects have led to current students doing consistently better.
- Leaders, including governors, have a good understanding of performance data. They have identified the key areas that needed improvement and ensured that staff focus on them. As a result teaching has improved, and this has led to better achievement for current students throughout the academy.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' marking and feedback to students do not always give them helpful guidance about how to improve their work.
- Students do not have sufficient opportunity to practise writing at length, or using advanced writing skills, in different subjects.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 have still not caught up with their peers because they are not attending regularly enough.
- Until recently, leaders and governors have not kept a close enough check on the links between these students' attendance and their progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students' learning in 42 lessons. Four of these were seen jointly with academy leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised students' work in their folders and books in a range of subjects.
- Discussions were held with students in lessons and with several groups formally and informally around the academy, including in the boarding provision.
- Inspectors listened to a group of pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the 150 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors reviewed the 56 questionnaires completed by staff expressing their views about the academy.
- Discussions were held with a wide range of people, including staff in the boarding provision, and three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation provided by academy leaders. This included a self-evaluation document, improvement plans, information on students' achievement, records of students' behaviour and attendance, documents related to safeguarding and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

David Bray, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sumeya Bhikhu	Additional Inspector
Alison Broomfield	Additional Inspector
Christine Murrell	Additional Inspector
Matthew Sammy	Additional Inspector
Dawn Bennett	Social Care Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ashby School converted to become an academy on 1 October 2012. When the predecessor school of the same name, was last inspected in May 2012, it was judged to be good overall.
- The academy is an above-average-sized secondary school. It includes boarding provision for up to 73 boys. At the time of the inspection, the accommodation housed 72 boys representing a wide range of different nationalities.
- Most pupils in the academy are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is also below average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards for secondary schools, which set out minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- A small group of students attend alternative education provision at Sir John Moore Foundation, Gaz Auto School, Arusma Beauty Salon, Marlene Reid Centre, Loxx Hair Studio, or Maplewell AIM for part of the week, alongside their lessons at the academy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that:
 - students have sufficient opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills across a range of subjects
 - marking gives students helpful information on how to make the best progress in improving their work.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - working closely with parents to improve the attendance of the small number of students whose achievement is still being affected by their absences
 - rigorously checking that this has the desired impact on their progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides skilled leadership and a clear focus on improvement priorities. Leaders have high aspirations for what teachers and students can achieve and provide strong, positive role models for their behaviour. Students, including in the boarding provision, have good opportunities to develop a strong sense of fairness, tolerance and respect for British values.
- Subject leaders, and other staff with leadership responsibilities, are effective and lead their areas well. This has ensured consistently strong achievement in science, mathematics and a wide range of other subjects. Improvements have been made to the progress made by current Year 10 and 11 students in English because of effective leadership.
- The senior leaders check students' progress regularly and have a good understanding of how well different groups of students are achieving. This has led to a strong focus on improving learning in English, and increasing the progress of specific groups. As a result, academy data, lesson observations and a review of work, shows that most students are doing well in all groups. Leaders are aware that a small number of students are still not making the progress they could.
- The leadership team has established regular and systematic procedures to check on the quality of teaching and learning. Ineffective teaching has improved through effective support or appropriate challenge. Staff feel they have benefited from good-quality training and support. As a result, learning in English is better and all staff have a very clear understanding of the need to focus on improving learning for specific identified groups. There is a strong link between pay rises and teaching quality.
- Leaders plan the use of pupil premium funding carefully and additional support is provided for disadvantaged students through extra sessions, individual teaching and additional resources. These students start at the academy about two terms behind other students in English and mathematics. In the 2014 Key Stage 4 examinations too many had not caught up sufficiently with their peers. Many have now caught up, but a few are still behind their classmates, especially where their attendance has not been good enough.
- Leaders ensure that the different groups of students who attend well have an equal chance to succeed, and that all students are treated with respect. Students and parents feel that there is no discrimination at the academy.
- Students' social and cultural development is developed well through a variety of arts and sports activities. There is also a good range of visits that enhance students' experiences, especially in the arts and humanities. Spiritual and moral issues are covered well through a regular series of dedicated lessons. There is good access to information about health through the 'Teen Health Stop' and extensive pastoral support programme. British values are promoted well through understanding of the democratic process and good teaching of fairness and tolerance.
- The headteacher and director of boarding are clear about the need to monitor and improve the lives of boarders. They are supported well by team leaders, dedicated boarding staff and the governors. Together, they have improved the quality of boarding since the last Ofsted inspection.
- Senior leaders and managers have improved the performance of boarding staff through rigorous training and checks on their work. All staff attend regular training and follow the boarding house's robust policies and procedures, which are based on current research. The boarding house displays original art on loan from the Leicestershire Museum. Boarders celebrate key events and dates throughout the calendar year including Chinese New Year, mid-autumn festival and Thanksgiving. Christmas and celebration awards are also key events within the boarding house.
- Leadership of the sixth form has focused well on subjects that require improvement. This has ensured that

students are starting to make better progress. Unvalidated data in 2014, academy data, observations and work seen, show that students are consistently making good progress.

- Senior leaders and the governing body have ensured that they enhance the quality of care provided to boarding students through careful improvement and development.
- The academy provides a wide range of subjects that interest and engages learners. Students, including boarders, feel they receive helpful guidance, which enables them to make informed decisions about their next stage of education, or training.
- Students following part-time courses on other sites are making good progress. For many this very positive experience has led to them to improving their attendance significantly, as well as achieving the progress targets they have been set. The academy is successful at ensuring that a high proportion of students are able to move on to appropriate employment, education or training.
- Parents, including of those students who are boarders, have a very positive view of the academy. The vast majority say they would recommend it to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body members have a good range of skills and expertise. Key governors pose challenging questions about the academy's performance. Governors have ensured that a separate committee has a good oversight of boarding provision.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. They use this to contribute to performance management systems and check that salary increases are justified.
 - Governors check carefully that the use of additional funds from the pupil premium is enabling disadvantaged students to improve their achievement. They have not, however, made sure that the progress of students with special educational needs, and the link between their attendance and progress, are checked rigorously.
 - The governing body oversees the management of finances and resources well. Governors regularly check safeguarding arrangements to make sure they are effective and meet statutory requirements, and receive regular training on their roles.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This includes behaviour in the sixth form, boarding house and alternative provision. Students arrive punctually to lessons and settle quickly to their learning.
- Students say that good behaviour is typical in lessons and around the academy. This is confirmed by the views of parents and staff. Behaviour in lessons and during break and lunchtime is typically good. Boarders say that behaviour in the boarding accommodation is respectful and always appropriate.
- There is a strong anti-bullying culture throughout the academy. Records show very few incidents of bullying and students, staff and parents all confirmed that this picture is representative of life at the academy.
- The academy works effectively to maintain good behaviour, including for those who attend off-site provision.
- Attendance has improved over the last three years and compares well to national attendance rates for Key Stage 4 students. Students in the sixth form attend well. The attendance of boarders is better than that of non-boarders. Although the academy has worked effectively to improve attendance, a small number of students who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs still do not attend well enough to catch up with their peers.
- Students are proud of the academy and as a result there is very little litter or graffiti. Students understand

the need to dress appropriately and smartly. Boarders are very positive about the boarding environment and feel part of a strong and supportive community.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The academy has a positive and caring atmosphere. Students say they feel safe and their parents agree with this view. They have a good understanding of fairness, respect and tolerance. Boarders say they feel very safe in the boarding accommodation and say they can turn to any member of staff if they have concerns.
- Students understand about different forms of bullying and other aspects of safety, including internet safety. Students are taught about risks in road safety and other aspects of life outside academy. They feel confident about these areas.
- Students, including boarders, say that bullying is rare. Parents who completed Parent View confirmed this view. Any concerns raised by boarders are acted upon quickly by 'house parents' and boarders say they feel they are 'a family' who support each other at all times. Staff do not tolerate bullying in the boarding house. There are effective procedures, which are implemented stringently by staff. Boarders understand that bullying in any form is not acceptable.
- The safety of boarders is given high priority. There are effective systems for safeguarding their welfare and promoting their good health. The boarders have an excellent insight into these matters because of the very open and honest discussions they have with staff. Boarders lead healthy lifestyles. They eat a healthy diet and take daily physical exercise.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have a good understanding of their subjects. They often plan a good range of tasks that motivate and interest students. This encourages them to want to succeed. It has led to them making very good progress in some subjects, including science and mathematics.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively and plan lesson activities based on an accurate assessment of students' understanding. This ensures that most students in all ability groups, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs and the most able, make good progress in science and across a wide range of other arts, humanities and other subjects.
- Better teaching of current students in English is leading to a higher proportion making good progress. Some disadvantaged students arrived at the academy with attainment below that of their peers, and had not made sufficient progress in English and mathematics. The effective teaching of current students is enabling those who attend well to make good progress.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective and this is enabling students to use their skills confidently across a wide range of subjects. Students are taught mathematical skills and have the opportunity to use them across a range of different questions and tasks.
- Reading is taught well and students are able to speak confidently. The extensive library is used well to ensure that students, including boarders, are encouraged to read widely. Students have experience of reading a wide range of texts.
- Writing is improving, especially in English lessons. The expectations that teachers have for writing quality, including students' ability to write more extended passages or use more advanced writing skills such as essay writing, are not consistently strong across all subject areas.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers are skilled in their subjects. Teaching of work-related subjects has been consistently good, with students receiving effective support and feedback. Teaching of academic subjects has improved and academy data, lessons observations and work seen show that it is good for current students. Underperforming subjects have been tackled through additional staff training,

support or, in a few cases, being removed from the curriculum.

- Teachers are effective at checking students' understanding and adjusting activities. Students have regular opportunities to discuss ideas together and this helps them to deepen their knowledge.
- Teachers often provide helpful verbal feedback for students. Marking and written comments are often good. However, some marking is not always regular or clear enough to help students improve their learning.
- Homework is used regularly to extend and develop learning. Students, including boarders, complete homework carefully and conscientiously.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students typically start at the academy with above-average attainment. The proportion gaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, has been above average for each of the last three years. Their combined scores in their best eight subjects also demonstrate above-average progress.
- The academy entered some students one year early for GCSE examinations in mathematics. Despite this, their achievement in mathematics was above average because some later retook examinations. The academy has now stopped this practice because of changes in the way that these results are counted.
- The small number of students studying work-related and other subjects away from the academy site achieve well. They are improving their attendance, gaining appropriate qualifications and making good progress against the targets set for their attainment.
- There is no significant difference between the achievement of students from different ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, when compared with others. The attainment of current boarders is below that of other students, but they have made good progress from lower starting points.
- The academy uses pupil premium funding for extra staffing, one-to-one tuition and additional educational resources for eligible students. Senior leaders have ensured that improving the progress and attainment of this group is a key priority for all staff. In 2014 disadvantaged students attained, on average, two GCSE grades lower than other students in mathematics, and one and half grades lower in English. They were also a grade behind other students nationally. Current academy progress data, lesson observations and a scrutiny of the work of current disadvantaged students shows that many are starting to attain better when compared to other students, in both English and mathematics. A few students are not and this is mainly because they do not attend well enough.
- The disabled students and those who have special educational needs currently in the school are mostly making good progress. As a group they did not make sufficient progress in 2014, and leaders rightly made improving their progress a priority. Effective work has been carried out to ensure that teaching assistants are trained well and provide effective support in lessons. Some students receive additional support and actions taken by leaders have resulted in many of these students currently in Years 10 and 11 making good progress. A small number are still not attending regularly enough to achieve as well as they should.

The sixth form provision is good

- The sixth form is improving, and because of changes made over the last 12 months it is now good. Students taking work-related qualifications have made consistently good progress. Students taking A-level courses have previously achieved well in several subjects but not done well enough in others. There is better consistency now. As a result, progress improved in 2014 examination results, based on unvalidated data. Current academy data, supported by lesson observations, work scrutiny and discussions with current students in Years 12 and 13, shows that further improvements have been made.

- Provision for the most able students is good, and an increasing proportion of students are moving on to the highly regarded 'Russell group' or Oxbridge universities. A high proportion of last year's students have taken up a place at university and almost all gained a place at their first choice.
- Almost all students start the sixth form with a GCSE grade C in English and mathematics. A small number do not, and they receive the necessary support to gain these qualifications. Disadvantaged students have not achieved as well as others in the past, but are currently doing better.
- Students attend well. They are positive about their experience and value the advice they receive from teachers. Boarders are very positive about the sixth form and academy data shows they are making good progress.
- Students behave well and are punctual to lessons. They are able to access a wide range of enrichment activities. Students benefit from regular access to a careers officer and opportunities to participate in activities with local employers.
- Students have a good understanding of British values and participate well in elections, support local feeder schools and contribute to fundraising activities for local charities. They understand fairness, respect and tolerance.
- During the inspection good learning was seen in several subjects. Students concentrated well and when given the opportunity they were able to think deeply and give well-considered answers to questions. Teaching is improving because leaders have identified subjects that have performed less well and provided support and challenge. This has led to improvements through staff training, a change of staff or in a few cases courses being discontinued.
- Leadership of the sixth form is effective. Leaders have tracked students' attainment and progress carefully and taken action to identify and remedy previous underperformance, especially in some A-level courses.

Outcomes for boarders	are outstanding
Quality of boarding provision and care	is outstanding
Boarders' safety	is outstanding
Leadership and management of boarding provision	are outstanding

- The academy meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools. Outcomes for boarders are outstanding. The academy makes a tremendous difference to the lives of its boarding students and relationships between staff and boarders are very positive. Boarders get on very well with each other and provide mutual support. Boarders stay active and understand how to live a healthy lifestyle. Many boarders successfully progress to higher education.
- Boarders make outstanding personal progress. They develop effective social skills, understand how to cope with difficulties and develop a wide range of skills that help them to be independent. Boarders say they are happy and speak warmly of the consistently good care, guidance and support they receive, aided by strong links with the main academy. Boarders develop a high level of independence. Boarders in the sixth form do their own laundry, develop budgeting skills, prepare snacks and cook in the sixth form kitchen area.
- The boarding provision and care is outstanding. It has a very positive and relaxed ethos. Boarders have excellent opportunities to take a role in planning activities, discussing resources and shaping the development of the provision. Accommodation is of a very high quality, allowing boarders to feel comfortable and secure. Younger boarders appreciate the dormitory style of accommodation. They say this facilitates the development of friendships and camaraderie. Food is of high quality and special diets are assessed and catered for well. The induction of new boarders, of all ages, is a key strength.
- The arrangements to keep boarders safe are outstanding. Staff have a high level of training and a very strong commitment to safeguarding. Boarders say that there is no bullying. They also feel very safe and secure. Arrangements to keep boarders safe through regular checks, storage of medicines and risk assessments are very well managed.
- School leaders and those managing boarding provision have ensured that the highest priority is given to the needs and welfare of the boarders. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. Staff receive a high level of training and support. Their work is regularly checked by leaders in order to ensure it is of high quality. Communication with parents and carers is very strong. Boarders feel that their views are listened to and respected. Leaders have maintained and improved further the provision since the last inspection.

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>

Boarding/Residential provision		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	138833
Social care unique reference number	SC001838
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	449115

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	14–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1714
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	600
Number of boarders on roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Blunt
Headteacher	Eddie Green
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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