

Samworth Church Academy

Sherwood Hall Road, Mansfield, NG18 2DY

Inspection dates 24–25 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The academy has improved rapidly since September 2014, particularly in mathematics. Students now make good progress across a wide range of subjects including English and mathematics.
- Leaders make good use of strong partnerships with other schools to share expertise and training opportunities. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving strongly.
- Teachers assess students' progress accurately. They use the results well to identify and support any who are falling behind.
- Disadvantaged students and those who have special educational needs receive good support and achieve well.
- Behaviour is good in and around the academy. Students are courteous, considerate and friendly.
- Governors, staff, parents and students are rightly proud of the significant improvements in behaviour and attitudes to learning. Students feel safe in the academy.
- The Principal is a strong leader, and receives a high level of support from the governing body.
- Leaders at all levels rigorously check the quality of teaching and students' progress. As a result they identify the correct priorities for improvement and act decisively to address them.
- The wide range of subjects available provides options for students of all abilities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always stretch and challenge students through the activities they use or the way they ask questions to gauge and extend students' understanding.
- Teachers in the sixth form do not always focus sharply enough on what students need to learn.
- Leaders have not ensured that courses in the sixth form meet students' interests, so not enough students complete their courses.
- Students have insufficient opportunities to read widely in order to extend their vocabulary for use in speaking and writing.
- Teachers do not consistently help students to improve their work by making sure they reflect on good advice and make the improvements suggested.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons. Seven of these observations were completed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also observed students at breaks and lunchtimes and attended tutorial periods.
- Discussions were held with students, staff, governors, the Principal, and representatives from the co-sponsors David Samworth and the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham.
- Inspectors took account of the 102 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and correspondence from parents. They also took account of 22 responses to staff questionnaires.
- A wide range of documents was examined including samples of students' work, information about students' progress, the academy's development plan and self-evaluation, records of any poor behaviour, records of governors' meetings and safeguarding documents.
- Inspectors listened to students read, and observed reading support lessons and the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make).

Inspection team

Sherry Gladwin, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Bernadette Przybek	Additional Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Additional Inspector
James Fuller	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The vast majority of students are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium is average. This is additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- An average proportion of students are disabled or have special educational needs.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The academy is co-sponsored by David Samworth and the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham.
- A small number of students in Key Stage 4 currently attend off-site work related and learning support courses at 'Real'.
- The academy works in partnership with the Outwood Institute of Education, the Redhill Teaching Alliance and Gordonstoun School.
- The principal was appointed in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and improve teaching by:
 - using the academy's procedures for marking consistently well, clearly indicating to students how they should improve their work and ensuring that they reflect on their comments and make improvements
 - giving students more opportunities to read widely and often in a range of subjects, in order to strengthen their vocabulary in spoken and written work
 - providing greater stretch and challenge for students through planned learning activities and effective questioning.
- Improve the sixth form and increase the numbers of students successfully completing their courses by:
 - changing the courses on offer to better meet the abilities and interests of students.
 - ensuring teachers plan learning that is sharply focussed on what students need to learn in order to accelerate their progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The principal has rapidly created a culture of high expectations in the academy. Leaders at all levels have grown in the skills required to improve teaching. Behaviour is now managed effectively through well-designed systems.
- The principal has changed the culture of the academy to one where there is an expectation that students will have good attitudes to learning; students have responded well to the new demands placed upon them. The improvements to teaching mean that students now make good progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Partnerships with good and outstanding schools provide opportunities for teachers to observe effective practice and develop their repertoire of skills. Subject leaders check the quality of teaching through regular lesson observations, 'learning walks' and book checks to ensure that students stay on track to achieve challenging targets.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to help disadvantaged students achieve good attendance and punctuality, academic progress and personal development. One-to-one tuition, small group sessions, after-school revision, booster classes, school uniform, residential trips, access to the arts and after-school clubs and activities are all contributing.
- Students are all treated with equal respect and valued as individuals. They are free from all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying.
- The wide range of academic and work-related subjects in the main school appeals to students of all abilities and interests, and encourage good engagement and attendance. Students benefit from good, impartial careers guidance. There are insufficient opportunities for students to read widely and often in order that they might develop a sophisticated range of vocabulary for use in speech and writing.
- Leaders, including those responsible for subjects, monitor students' progress towards aspirational targets each half term. Any students identified as not on track to achieve their potential are given additional support to close any emerging gaps in their learning and restore confidence. Leaders' rigorous systems for managing progress, behaviour and attendance include students educated on other sites. Dedicated staff ensure that any absences are followed up without delay. Support staff establish good communication with hard-to-reach families, which supports students' good behaviour and attendance.
- The co-sponsors provide experienced and skilled professionals who serve alongside parents and staff on the academy's governing body. Governors' links with the world of finance, business and education are used well to broaden the horizons of staff and students.
- The academy's work to keep students safe, including those attending offsite courses is effective and meets statutory requirements. Reporting procedures, including referrals of safeguarding concerns to the local authority, are of a high standard. Staff listen to students carefully and treat them with compassion, care and understanding.
- The broad range of subjects available to students promotes British values well. Students treat one another with respect and appreciate the diversity of religions, cultures and non-religious systems in modern Britain. Through the shared values of the academy, students gain a clear grasp of right and wrong, and develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects to their character. They understand the value of democracy. During the inspection mock elections were held for the youth parliament.
- The leadership of the sixth form is not as good as other areas of the school's work, so the sixth form provision is not as effective as the main school. Leaders have not taken enough account of students' and parents' views when deciding which courses to offer, so they do not always match their abilities or appeal to their interests. Leaders have not improved teaching as quickly in the sixth form as they have in the rest

of the school.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors bring a range of knowledge, skills and experience to their role, and do so effectively. They are dedicated and ambitious for students to do well. Governors monitor students' behaviour and academic progress against set targets. They understand and interpret information on students' progress and performance because they are well trained in this and other areas of governance.
- Governors understand the academy's strengths and areas for development. They carefully monitor progress in implementing the initiatives in the academy development plan, including those aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning, through reports from the Principal at governing body meetings and visits to the academy.
- Governors understand the value of good teaching in securing high standards. They manage the Principal's performance closely. The Principal's own targets are used to determine the targets of other staff and help to drive improvement. Underperformance is monitored and dealt with effectively. Any pay rises for teachers are linked appropriately to students' progress and good teaching.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students have a good understanding of right and wrong, and behave in a mature, polite and friendly manner. They are considerate in word and action, for instance by holding doors open for others. Students' attitudes to learning are positive and they respond to teachers' instructions quickly and sensibly. They listen politely to adults and to one another, taking turns to make contributions to group and class discussions.
- Rewards and praise are used successfully to motivate and reward students for their effort, good attainment and thoughtfulness. Year 11 students are keen to receive reward points. The Samworth shield is used regularly to raise aspirations and reward good progress and achievement.
- Students are highly cooperative. Good collaboration between students and teachers is visible in lessons and around the site. Staff and students work harmoniously to fulfil the academy's aim to 'be the best that you can be'. The vast majority of students work hard to fulfil the 'pledge' or contract that they have made regarding good behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Students spoke knowledgably of the consequences that follow inappropriate behaviour and are proud of the significant improvements made to the quality of behaviour more recently. There has been a sharp reduction in fixed-term exclusions involving violence and defiance. Care is taken to record and report unacceptable behaviour and keep parents and carers informed.
- Students enjoy coming to school. Attendance is average and improving. Students attend punctually and move between classes quickly so that lessons start on time and continue without disruption. The pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve the attendance of eligible students. The behaviour and attendance of students attending off-site provision is monitored closely so that they attend well and make good progress.
- The academy works well to support disabled students and those who have special educational needs, or sometimes show challenging behaviour. Good links with parents and external agencies, together with the full involvement of students in the decisions about the support they receive, result in clear individual support plans and consistent approaches to behaviour management. Students develop good techniques in managing their own behaviour and progress well towards becoming self-regulating, responsible adults who are able to make a good contribution to society.
- Students are proud to belong to the academy and wear their uniform with pride. They take their roles as prefects, captains, council members, head boy and head girl, and learning ambassadors very seriously. They use these roles to help shape the academy and grow in leadership skills. Good links with the local community include visits to the elderly at key points of the year to deliver Christmas hampers or Easter eggs. Students show good moral understanding of the principles of fair trade and raise money for a

variety of charities.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students receive good training in internet safety and know how to use privacy settings and social media safely. They know what to do in cases of cyber-bullying. Students say that the academy deals with such matters firmly and effectively.
- Students feel safe in the academy. Recent changes to the way they leave the dining hall have made some students feel safer on the corridors. Students say that bullying in its various forms is uncommon and that teachers deal with incidents of a racist, sexist and homophobic nature firmly and quickly. Academy records show that there are few instances of this kind.
- Students are confident that adults, particularly the 'learning managers', will help them resolve any personal challenges and conflict they may face. They say that when they report concerns to staff, they are dealt with swiftly.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers ensure high levels of cooperation from students. They show good behaviour management skills and treat students with respect. Students respond positively and maintain good relationships with their teachers and others. The positive environment in the classroom generates openness and confidence so that students feel safe to ask questions and contribute answers. The vast majority of students work sensibly and produce good work.
- Teachers routinely and carefully check students' progress, including the progress of students attending offsite provision. They quickly identify any who do not make the progress they should. These students are discussed during frequent progress meetings. Teachers subsequently plan and take quick action to help students improve their work. A wide range of strategies are used, such as small group sessions, revision classes and one-to-one tuition. Parents' evenings are used well to engage parents and get their support for learning.
- Good collaboration between teachers and teaching assistant's leads to effective planning of small group work and support in class for students who are disabled or have special educational needs. Support in English and mathematics is particularly successful in helping these students to make good progress.
- The teaching of reading, writing, communication and mathematics is good. Students make good progress because of the wide range of additional support available, including accelerated reading approaches, online numeracy and literacy programmes, enrichment activities including educational visits and trips overseas.
- Reading is taught well and any students requiring additional support receive lessons to improve their reading, writing and spelling. However, not enough opportunities are available for students to read widely and often in order to strengthen their vocabulary for speaking and writing.
- Teachers mark students' classwork and homework regularly and accurately. They provide constructive comments that build students' confidence. Marking is of a high quality in some areas of the academy. However, it is not consistently good because some teachers do not follow the academy's policy on making clear to students what they need to do to improve their work or ensure that they make the corrections necessary to improve its quality.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan learning that is stimulating and engages students. However teachers' questions do not always challenge students to reflect, analyse and synthesise ideas sufficiently well. Sometimes learning activities do not stretch and challenge students to achieve their potential, particularly students of middle ability and the most able.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards are improving rapidly, particularly in mathematics. Across the academy students are on track to achieve above average results in a wide range of subjects.
- In 2014 students achieved below-average results in terms of five A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics. Attainment in English was average, but in mathematics it was significantly below. Good improvements in teaching, and especially in mathematics, are resulting in better progress for students. Academy information shows that students are on track to exceed last year's national standards in 2015.
- In 2014 students made good progress in English. However, progress in mathematics was much slower. The academy has tackled this through its partnerships with teaching schools and by appointing good leadership to the mathematics faculty. Clear direction, accompanied by rigorous monitoring, has resulted in good progress by students. Academy information shows that students are on track to make good progress in mathematics in 2015. Progress in English in 2015 is expected to be broadly similar to 2014.
- Disadvantaged students did not achieve as well as their classmates in 2014. They did not make good progress in English or mathematics and there was a significant gap between disadvantaged students and their classmates. On average they were a half of a GCSE grade behind both in English and in mathematics. When compared to all students nationally, they were two thirds of a grade behind in English and three quarters of a grade behind in mathematics. Rigorous tracking and well-planned academic support are helping to close gaps. Higher outcomes are expected in 2015.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs did not make good progress in 2014. Leaders have now ensured that such students' progress is assessed accurately and that swift actions are taken to help them make up any ground they have lost in the past. The newly developed progress learning centre provides good academic support for students. Data on their progress shows that students with special educational needs are now making good progress and achieving well.
- The most able students are making good progress across a wide range of subjects. Greater stretch and challenge than that offered last year is now provided through the enrichment programme and master classes. This is leading to improved results for the most able. Academy tracking shows that such students are on track to achieve high standards in 2015.
- Students are entered early for GCSEs in English and mathematics but this does not prevent them from achieving well. The academy carefully selects students for early entry and only those capable of achieving four levels of progress are entered. Successful students are able to focus on weaker subjects or progress to higher qualifications.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make good progress due to the effective support provided to boost their reading, writing and communication skills. Students attending courses off site make good progress. They are on track to achieve good outcomes in external examinations.

The sixth form provision requires improvement

- The leadership of the sixth form requires improvement. Leaders are growing in awareness of what constitutes good sixth form provision. However, reviews of the study programmes have not taken full account of the views of parents and students. Too many students leave before they have finished their course because they are not well suited to their choice of study. Courses are either not matched well enough to their abilities or fail to interest students.
- The quality of teaching does not promote good learning and progress. Teachers show good subject knowledge but do not explain well enough to students what it is that they are to learn in any given lesson, or focus upon in a particular assignment. This leaves some students confused about exactly what it is they should be doing or what assessment criteria they are trying to meet.

- Achievement requires improvement. Although students who study work-related courses achieve above-average results, those who follow academic courses do not achieve as well and standards on these courses are significantly below average.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. They attend well and feel safe in the academy. They make a valuable contribution to academy life through roles such as head boy and head girl, and model the academy's values well to younger pupils. They have a good understanding of right and wrong, contribute to fundraising and help to build a harmonious community in the academy.

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	135583
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	453555

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1062
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Linney
Principal	Barry Found
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2013
Telephone number	01623 644252
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