

The Newark Academy

London Road, Balderton, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 3AL

Inspection dates

28–29 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

16 to 19 study programmes

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders, including the school sponsor, the Lincoln College Academy Trust, have not acted quickly enough to challenge the poor performance of the school. As a result, outcomes for pupils have declined rapidly.
- Too many pupils make inadequate progress across a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Leaders lack an accurate view of the school. They do not have reliable systems in place to track and monitor pupils' performance.
- Leaders and governors have not used the pupil premium funding effectively. The gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school is too wide and is not closing.
- Attendance is below the national average. Too many disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are regularly absent from school.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate. Teachers do not regularly check on pupils' understanding in lessons or plan learning that is appropriate for pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils do not trust their teachers to help them to do their best.
- Leaders have not put in place a clear behaviour policy for teachers to follow. There is too much poor behaviour in lessons, which negatively affects learning.
- Leaders do not provide pupils with appropriate careers advice and guidance. Pupils are not prepared well for the next stages of their education.
- Leadership of the sixth form is poor. The school has failed to provide appropriate study programmes for students.
- Leaders have not provided for pupils' understanding of fundamental British values or for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly-appointed headteacher has brought stability to the school. He has a clear focus on improving teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes. Staff, parents and pupils have confidence in him to raise standards.
- The Torch Academy Gateway Trust has been supporting leadership of the school and is due to take over as the school sponsor in September. The trust took immediate action to appoint the new headteacher and improve the leadership of the school.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and reduce the inconsistencies in teaching by:
 - making sure that all teachers use information about pupils' attainment and progress to provide work that is at the right level
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide them with work that is appropriately challenging.
- Substantially improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - reducing the level of persistent absence so that it is no greater than that seen nationally, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - making sure that all teachers use the new whole-school behaviour system consistently so that low-level disruption is eradicated
 - improving the provision of impartial careers advice and guidance to pupils in Years 7 to 11, as well as for students in the sixth form.
- Dramatically improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
 - pupils make at least expected progress by the end of key stage 4 and key stage 5
 - the gaps between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school significantly reduce.
- Improve the quality of 16 to 19 provision by:
 - putting in place strong leadership of the sixth form
 - ensuring that the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes are met.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - securing effective leadership at all levels, including governance, across the school
 - ensuring that leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to improve the attendance, attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils
 - making sure that leaders closely track and monitor the work they do to check that all their actions have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes
 - consistently promoting fundamental British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the curriculum.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Poor leadership since the last inspection has resulted in a decline in standards across the school. The school's sponsor, the Lincoln College Academy Trust, and the governors failed to act quickly enough to prevent this decline.
- Instability in staffing and constant changes of teachers have meant that pupils have continued to underachieve. Pupils say that they have had lots of different teachers and they are not always subject specialists. As a result, the quality of teaching is inadequate and pupils and parents feel let down by the school.
- Leaders have allowed a culture of low expectations to develop across the school.
- Senior leaders do not have accurate or reliable systems in place to monitor pupils' performance. Consequently, pupils who are falling behind are not identified or given additional support. Outcomes for pupils are inadequate. The majority of pupils are not making enough progress during their time at the school.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum meets pupils' needs. They have failed to provide pupils with appropriate advice and guidance about their careers or the next steps in their education. As a result, pupils are following courses which are not appropriate for them and therefore have negative attitudes towards their learning.
- Leaders have failed to plan opportunities for pupils to learn about fundamental British values or to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders are not preparing pupils sufficiently for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils say that there are very few enrichment opportunities for them outside lessons and that they would like more extra-curricular clubs.
- Some middle leaders do not have a clear understanding of their role and therefore find it difficult to plan for the areas on which they lead. They feel that they have had very little support or guidance from senior leaders. One middle leader said they had been left 'rudderless'.
- Senior leaders have not provided well for teachers' professional development. As a result, teachers are unclear about senior leaders' expectations of what good teaching is. Staff morale is low.
- Leaders have not been effective in their use and monitoring of the additional pupil premium funding provided for disadvantaged pupils. There are large gaps in the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared to other pupils in the school, and these gaps are not closing.
- The school's use of an alternative curriculum for a small number of pupils is closely monitored and evaluated and, as a result, these pupils make appropriate progress.
- The new headteacher has only been at the school for four weeks, but has quickly understood what needs to be done to improve the school. He has a strong vision for raising standards and expectations, and has already communicated this to parents, staff and pupils, who all spoke very positively about him to inspectors. Pupils say they have had, 'a rough deal', but they are confident that the new headteacher will now improve teaching at the school and help them to make progress. The headteacher has restructured the senior leadership team and appointed a number of new senior leaders for September, to help him improve outcomes and provision for pupils. For example, he has quickly appointed a new member of staff with significant expertise in how best to use pupil premium funding to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. He has impressive plans for the school, assuring staff and pupils of his commitment to the school and that he will only accept the best for them. At the time of the inspection, it was too early to see the impact of his leadership.
- The Torch Gateway Academy Trust is taking over as the new school sponsor from September. They have a successful history in supporting schools to raise standards. Their first action, with the agreement of the current sponsor, was to appoint the new headteacher.
- Newly-qualified teachers may be appointed. The new headteacher has committed to take responsibility for their support and induction.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is inadequate because governors have not done enough to prevent the decline in the school's performance. Although there is some evidence of challenge in the minutes of the governing body meetings, they have too readily accepted inaccurate and unsupported information from school leaders about pupils' performance. They therefore failed to hold leaders to account for pupils' underachievement.

- Governors have not ensured that the additional pupil premium funding provided for disadvantaged pupils has been spent effectively to help these pupils make progress in line with other pupils.
- Governors are ineffective in holding leaders to account for the extra funding received to help Year 7 pupils catch up in English and mathematics.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All statutory safeguarding checks meet requirements.
- Leaders have introduced a range of assemblies and tutor time activities to teach pupils how to keep themselves safe online. All pupils spoken with said they knew how to protect themselves on the internet.
- Staff and governors all have up-to-date safeguarding training, including on female genital mutilation, radicalisation and extremism. The school has clear systems in place to check that pupils are safe and staff work closely with a range of outside agencies. Staff are persistent about following up referrals to ensure that potentially vulnerable pupils are protected.
- The school's checks on the single central record meet requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- Teaching is inconsistent across the school. Teachers and pupils do not understand assessment information, or where pupils are in their learning, well enough. Teachers do not regularly check on pupils' understanding in lessons or plan learning that is appropriate to pupils' needs. Consequently, learning is either too easy or too difficult and does not take into account pupils' starting points.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, teachers do not sufficiently challenge pupils who, as a result, become disengaged and switched off from their learning.
- Inspectors saw many lessons where pupils turned up late and were reluctant to settle to learning. Pupils often talked over the teacher and to each other across the room during lessons, about topics unrelated to the lesson. Leaders have not given teachers clear policies or routines to follow, so there is an inconsistent approach to managing this type of disrespectful behaviour from pupils. The inspectors' observations echoed concerns expressed by a significant number of parents, staff and pupils, who said that behaviour in lessons is not good enough and that it leads to a lack of learning and progress.
- Not all teachers promote equality of opportunity in lessons. Inspectors heard some derogatory language in lessons, which teachers did not challenge, and pupils say they feel that some teachers do not respect them or treat everyone fairly.
- Leaders have not ensured pupils' literacy, and communication skills are developed across the school. Similarly, leaders have not provided a school-wide approach to helping pupils develop their mathematical knowledge. This is a key reason why pupils are underachieving in both English and mathematics.
- Pupils do not take pride in the presentation of their books. There are many examples of graffiti and pages falling out of pupils' books. This is representative of the low expectations to which pupils and teachers have resigned themselves.
- The vast majority of pupils who spoke with inspectors said that homework is not regularly set.
- Most pupils who spoke with inspectors said they want to learn and do well. In lessons where teachers' expectations were high and teachers had a good subject knowledge and passion for their subject, pupils responded well. For example, in a Spanish lesson the teacher explained about the different approach to food and eating in Spain and compared it to British culture. Pupils listened intently. They were excited about learning and inspired and confident to explore their own ideas and opinions in Spanish.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Leaders have not promoted pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Many pupils who spoke with inspectors had low self-confidence. The school has failed to promote pupils' understanding of how to be successful learners. As a result, pupils do not have faith in the school or teachers to help them make progress.
- There were mixed messages about the extent of bullying in the school and how leaders dealt with it. A number of pupils and parents expressed concerns about bullying and said that they were not confident

the school always dealt with it effectively. However, other groups of pupils from both key stages 3 and 4 who spoke with inspectors said that they did not have any concerns about bullying and that if it did happen, 'teachers were straight onto it'. Pupils also spoke positively about the introduction of 'worry boxes' into tutor rooms, where they can inform teachers about any concerns that they have. However, these are not used consistently by all tutors. Leaders acknowledge that more work is needed to reduce bullying and to make sure that all pupils are confident that any incidents that do occur will be dealt with quickly.

- A small number of pupils in key stages 3 and 4 access their education at alternative providers. Leaders are effective in monitoring these pupils to ensure that they attend, are safe and make appropriate progress.
- Senior leaders have provided assemblies and tutor activities to teach pupils how to keep safe online and as a result all pupils who spoke with inspectors were confident that they knew how to protect themselves on the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Leaders have not been successful in introducing a clear and consistent whole-school behaviour policy, as recommended at the last inspection. Too many pupils behave poorly in lessons, between lessons and at break and lunchtimes. Poor behaviour is often left unchallenged by teachers.
- Fixed-term exclusions have increased and are too high for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have only recently started to take effective action to reduce these.
- Pupils moved into a new building in January and learning spaces are kept clean and litter-free. However, many pupils show a lack of pride in wearing their school uniform correctly. Pupils told inspectors that teachers are not consistent in making sure that all pupils wear their uniform. As a result, pupils do not see the point in following the school uniform policy and choose to ignore it.
- Pupils' attendance remains below the national average. Too many pupils are regularly absent from school, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have not taken prompt or effective action to reduce this.
- Since his arrival, the headteacher has acted swiftly to raise expectations of pupils' behaviour and has introduced a 'walking on the left' policy to improve pupils' conduct around the school. He has also insisted that pupils all line up before going into assembly. Pupils have quickly recognised the positive changes since the headteacher started and welcome them.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Outcomes have declined since the last inspection. The proportion of Year 11 pupils who achieve five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, has decreased over the last three years and is well below the national average.
- Pupils generally enter the school with attainment that is broadly in line with national averages in English and mathematics. They leave in Year 11 with attainment below national averages. This represents significant underachievement.
- Too few pupils make the progress expected of them across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. This means that pupils are unprepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- In 2015, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- Leaders do not have a reliable system in place to predict pupils' attainment and progress with accuracy. Despite this, leaders believe that pupils' attainment and progress for 2016 will be below national expectations at both key stages 4 and 5.
- Disadvantaged pupils make particularly poor progress. Leaders have not given them additional support to catch up. There are wide gaps between the progress disadvantaged pupils make compared with other pupils in the school. Leaders have not taken effective action to close these gaps and, in many cases, they are widening even further.
- Leaders' expectations for the most able pupils are not high enough and these pupils have not been supported to achieve well. There are very few pupils who achieve the higher grades of which they are capable.
- Leaders have not used specialist funding to support Year 7 pupils who need to catch up with their peers in reading and mathematics. As a result, these pupils' attainment is still below age-related expectations.

- Leaders have failed to offer appropriate support to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, they have not made enough progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' books in humanities and languages showed positive signs of progress and improvement. This is a result of the teachers of these subjects having higher expectations of pupils.

16 to 19 study programmes

are inadequate

- Leadership of the sixth form is poor and as a result, outcomes for students have declined. The progress students make is inadequate.
- The school has failed to provide appropriate study programmes for students. Therefore, students' needs are not being met.
- Leaders do not have a clear understanding of how well students are doing. They are not confident that students are on track to make the progress expected of them from their starting points. Leaders predict that students' outcomes this year will be worse than in 2015.
- Not all teachers provide students with sufficient challenge in lessons or ensure that learning is appropriate to students' prior attainment. This limits the progress which students make.
- Leaders have not provided students with access to independent careers advice and guidance. As a result, students are not prepared well for the next stages of their education. Some, who wanted to follow vocational course in the sixth form, were promised places at the school. However, the school failed to fulfil their offer and students were forced to find courses at other schools. Consequently, they rightly feel let down by the school.
- Leaders have not offered work experience to all students who wanted it. Students said they were disappointed by this.
- The small number of students who have retaken English and mathematics in the sixth form have made good progress. Pass rates are high. However, leaders have not provided appropriate support to develop all students' literacy and numeracy skills in the sixth form and prepare them for life outside of school.
- Leaders have not done enough to retain students in the sixth form. Retention rates are extremely poor. Students do not trust the school to support them to complete the courses they start or provide them with an adequate level of teaching to help them reach their target grades.
- Students say they would like to take a more active role in the school, for example, supporting and mentoring younger pupils. Leaders have not taken any action to address this, despite it being recommended in the last report.
- Attendance in the sixth form is good. The number of students who go on to education, employment or training is in line with national expectations.

School details

Unique reference number	138872
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10011763

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	619
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Rossall
Headteacher	Andy Seymour
Telephone number	01636 615000
Website	www.thenewarkacademy.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@thenewarkacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 April 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The Newark Academy was established in November 2012.
- The headteacher has been in post since May 2016. A senior leader for closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers was appointed in June 2016.
- The school is currently sponsored by the Lincoln College Academy Trust. The Torch Academy Gateway Trust is taking over as sponsor from September 2016.
- The large majority of pupils are White British, with a lower than average proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children looked after by the local authority, is broadly in line with the national average.
- A very small number of pupils are enrolled on alternative courses at Maple, a shared provision with Magnus Church of England School, and at Acorn and Hill Holt.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 29 lessons, nine of which were seen jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors made short visits to tutor time.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at break, lunchtime and as pupils moved around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised, in detail, a range of pupils' books in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector had a discussion by telephone with a representative of the Lincoln College Academy Trust, the current school sponsor.
- Inspectors spoke with a wide range of pupils from all year groups in meetings, in lessons and around the school at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of the school's documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school action plan, data on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding procedures, evaluations of the quality of teaching and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 28 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and 23 responses to the online staff questionnaires. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Sally Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ellenor Beighton	Ofsted Inspector
David Bennett	Ofsted Inspector
John Edwards	Ofsted Inspector

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