

Corby Business Academy

Academy Way, Gretton Road, Corby, Northamptonshire NN17 5EB

Inspection dates

29–30 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- School leaders have an overgenerous view of the strengths of the school and they have not taken action to address weaknesses quickly enough.
- Pupils' progress is below the national average and leaders have not taken action to ensure that it improves rapidly enough.
- Leaders have not ensured that disadvantaged pupils make rapid enough progress to match that of other pupils nationally.
- Outcomes in the sixth form are not yet good enough.
- Leaders are not robust enough in their monitoring of staff and their performance. They do not take effective action to challenge weaker performance.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across the school. Teachers do not have high-enough expectations of what pupils should be able to achieve. Pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Teachers do not use pupil performance information to effectively plan for individuals' needs.
- Teachers do not consistently apply the school's policy in giving feedback and guidance to pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is not consistently good across all areas of the school. There is too much low-level disruption in lessons.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average and requires improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The school's special provision for pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties provides excellent support for the pupils attending it and they make very good progress.
- Leaders have taken steps to amend the curriculum to improve outcomes for pupils.
- The school provides effectively for pupils' well-being. They are supported and cared for well.
- Pupils in the sixth form are supported well to progress to the next stages in their education, training or employment.
- The school promotes pupils' social, cultural, moral and spiritual development well. Pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular and enriching activities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership by:
 - developing the accuracy of senior leaders' self-evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, so they can take informed action to improve the school, including the sixth form
 - using information from monitoring activities to hold staff to account more closely
 - ensuring there is greater consistency in the impact of teachers' guidance and feedback to pupils, in line with the whole-school policy.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - work is matched to pupils' abilities more closely
 - the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged.
- Improve the rates of progress in all subjects, including in the sixth form, so that pupils' progress is at least in line with national averages.
- Improve pupil behaviour so that it is consistently good in all areas of the school.
- Improve pupils' attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders have identified the areas of the school in need of improvement but have an overgenerous view of the school's strengths.
- Leaders do not have high-enough expectations of what pupils should be able to achieve and they have not taken effective action to improve the progress of pupils across a wide range of subjects.
- Senior leaders have not taken enough action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment quickly enough. This means that pupils' progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils, is not improving rapidly enough to match that of other pupils nationally.
- Improvement plans are not detailed enough to accurately address the areas in need of immediate improvement.
- Leaders carry out monitoring activities but they do not effectively use the information from such activities to challenge and hold staff accountable for their performance. This means that staff performance is not improving rapidly enough. For example, leaders have identified specific aspects of teaching that require improvement but they have not taken action to ensure that it improves.
- Leaders have set performance management targets but these are too vague to effect the necessary improvement in day-to-day practice.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school's behaviour management policy is consistently applied. Several teachers report that they do not feel supported in managing pupils' behaviour.
- Leaders have redesigned the curriculum to enable pupils to make better progress. This is benefiting current pupils in the school. There is a good range of subjects available at key stage 4 and leaders are working with other schools in the trust to extend the curriculum on offer in the sixth form.
- Leaders model positive attitudes and values. They consistently promote fundamental British values and there are many opportunities to extend pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, both within the curriculum and via after-school enrichment activities.
- There is a growing range of extra-curricular activities, including sporting and cultural experiences. A high proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, take advantage of these opportunities. Leaders support pupils' attendance by providing an additional bus service to transport pupils home.
- Leadership of the school's special provision for pupils with complex, moderate, severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties is a strength of the school. Leaders have high aspirations for these pupils and they track their progress closely, intervening and adapting their provision as appropriate. Leaders recognise the need to prepare pupils for the next stages in their education and support pupils well in progressing towards these.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or

disabilities is good. Pupils' needs are quickly identified and appropriate support is put in place. This means that pupils make good progress.

Governance of the school

- Governance is provided by members of the local governing body and the trust. Governors are committed to improving the quality of education at the school. They are passionate about supporting pupils to succeed. However, their view of the school's strengths is overgenerous.
- Scrutiny of the minutes of governors' meetings shows that they ask relevant and challenging questions about the school's performance.
- Governors have received appropriate training in safeguarding.
- Governors' monitoring of how the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding is used is not sufficiently robust to ensure it has enough impact on pupils' progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is an extensive 'well-being' team at the school and pupils feel confident and comfortable in seeking support.
- Leaders take appropriate action if they have concerns over a child's welfare and are robust in following up and checking with other agencies that actions are effective.
- Staff receive appropriate, regular training and updates. They fully understand their responsibilities in ensuring the safety and well-being of all pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent within and across subjects and year groups.
- Teachers do not have high-enough expectations of what pupils can, and should be able to, achieve. Thus pupils' progress over time has been slow.
- Teachers do not use information about pupils' performance to plan for different abilities. As school leaders recognise, there is too much 'teaching to the middle'. The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are not sufficiently challenged. In too many lessons pupils waste time completing work that does not help them to make progress.
- There is too much emphasis on completing activities rather than learning from them. A lack of purpose and a lack of challenge encourage pupils to lose focus which leads to low-level disruption.
- Where teachers provide additional, challenging activities, they do not communicate high-enough expectations to pupils. This means that some higher-ability pupils are content to work on easy tasks rather than selecting the more challenging work.
- Teachers do not apply the school's feedback policy consistently. Inspectors saw many examples of unfinished work and pupils had not responded to teacher requests to complete it.

- There are some opportunities for pupils to develop their writing across the curriculum but low teacher expectations, particularly of boys, limits pupils' progress.
- Teaching in the school's special provision for pupils with complex, moderate, severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties is strong. Teachers have a very secure understanding of pupils' needs and ensure that these are met through careful matching of work to each pupil's ability.
- There is effective use of teaching assistants to support the progress of individual pupils. Teaching assistants encourage pupils' independence and there is a good balance of challenge and support.
- Inspectors observed several examples of highly effective teacher questioning. Teachers asked probing questions which deepened pupils' understanding. Use of follow-up questions developed pupils' understanding further, enabling pupils to make good progress.
- Inspectors observed some examples of strong teaching, particularly within the English department. In the lessons we visited where learning was strongest, teachers used their knowledge of individual pupils to set appropriate work that challenged them to make progress.
- Reading is encouraged and much work has been undertaken by the librarian to support and encourage pupils' reading habits, particularly those of boys and disadvantaged pupils. The numbers of pupils who borrow books from the school library has risen significantly and continues to improve. A variety of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, read to inspectors, doing so with enjoyment and flair.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils do not fully understand how to be a successful learner so they do not consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Although many pupils are proud of their achievements, too many pupils do not take pride in their work, which limits their progress.
- Pupils who attend off-site provision, designed to support their learning and behaviour, are well cared for. Their attendance is very good. Their progress and well-being are monitored by the school and by the external provider.
- Pupils understand how to maintain healthy lifestyles and how to keep themselves safe. They value the support that is offered by the school's 'well-being' team.
- Incidents of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying, are rare. Pupils say that where bullying does occur, it is effectively dealt with and they feel comfortable in reporting any concerns.
- Children who are looked after by the local authority are well cared for. Their progress is carefully monitored and additional support is provided where needed. School tracking demonstrates that pupils who are currently in school are making good progress. Pupils

say that they feel supported and safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Teachers do not apply the school's behaviour policy consistently so poor behaviour in a number of lessons is not effectively challenged. There is low-level disruption in too many lessons. For example, on several occasions, inspectors observed pupils talking to each other while teachers were giving instructions and explanations. This meant that these pupils did not understand what they had to do. In addition, inspectors saw too many examples of poor behaviour in lessons.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is inconsistent. Although many pupils are polite and courteous, too many pupils show disrespect towards each other and towards staff. They are unable to maintain good self-discipline.
- Teachers do not consistently challenge derogatory or aggressive language. This means that not all pupils recognise the inappropriateness of such behaviour.
- Pupils' attendance requires improvement. Attendance has declined over the last three years and attendance is now slightly below the national average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has increased and is now above the national average.
- Pupils are punctual to school in the morning.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions for all pupils is reducing. However, the number of exclusions for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains above the national average.
- Pupils value the building and its facilities. The school environment is well kept and there is no litter or graffiti.
- Where teaching is stronger, pupils' behaviour is more positive because they are interested and challenged by their work which means they are able to focus more effectively.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is not improving quickly enough. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do not make enough progress in a range of subjects by the end of key stage 4. Their overall progress is below that of other pupils nationally. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is significantly below that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils' progress in English and mathematics, by the end of key stage 4, is improving and is now similar to that of other pupils nationally. However, disadvantaged pupils' progress is slightly below that of other pupils nationally and the progress of middle-ability pupils in mathematics is significantly below that of similar pupils nationally.
- In the Ebacc qualification, pupils make less progress than all pupils nationally and disadvantaged pupils' progress is significantly below that of other pupils nationally.
- In modern foreign languages, pupils' progress is significantly below that of other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is in the bottom 10% of all schools nationally.
- School tracking information indicates that the progress of current pupils in the school is

improving. However, inspectors did not see enough evidence in lessons, or in pupils' books, that their progress is improving rapidly enough.

- Pupils' progress in science is stronger than in other subject areas and is similar to that made by all pupils nationally. Low-ability pupils make very good progress and are in the top 10% of all schools nationally.
- Teachers carefully track the progress of pupils who attend the school's special provision. They use this information to plan for each pupil's specific needs. This means that they make very good progress in a variety of areas such as speech, language and communication, social skills and academic skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, who do not attend the school's special provision, make good progress across a variety of subject areas.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Leaders recognise some of the areas of the sixth form which require improvement. For example, they acknowledge that outcomes for students are not yet good enough. However, leaders are not clear enough about their responsibility to improve provision in the sixth form and are too dependent on senior leaders at whole-school level.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form is inconsistent and therefore requires improvement. Where teaching is weaker, work is not appropriate to individual students' abilities. In the lessons we visited where learning was strongest, students are challenged by the work that is set and supported by their teachers. This means that they make good progress.
- The quality of feedback that students receive from their teachers is inconsistent across the sixth form. Students report that in some lessons, teachers do not offer helpful guidance to support their progress. Students who inspectors spoke with said that they are not always set appropriate targets to help them improve their work.
- The sixth form meets the interim minimum standards set by the government in both academic and vocational courses. However, outcomes for all learners are below national averages. Students do not make as much progress as they should in both academic and vocational courses.
- The proportion of students making sufficient progress in level 2 qualifications in English and mathematics is high.
- Sixth-form students' behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Students are confident and self-assured. They are extremely proud of their school. Students value the opportunity to act as mentors to younger pupils and recognise the importance of this role.
- Relationships between staff and students in the sixth form are positive and students feel confident to seek advice and help from their teachers. Students value the support they receive from staff.
- The school provides good advice and support for students regarding their next steps. For example, students are supported in applying for university places and understand the variety of options available to them, such as apprenticeships and further education. As a result, the vast majority of students progress well to the next stage in their

education or training.

- The school meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes. Work experience is available on an individual and bespoke basis. Leaders make an effort to ensure that courses meet the needs of learners upon entry and retention rates are improving as a result. Plans are in place to develop the breadth of the curriculum by collaborating with other schools across the trust.
- Safeguarding in the sixth form is effective. The curriculum supports students' personal development and well-being. Students have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy, both physically and emotionally.

School details

Unique reference number	135306
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10026177

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,086
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clive Chenery
Principal	John Henrys (Executive Principal)
Telephone number	01536 303120
Website	www.corbybusinessacademy.org
Email address	principal@corbybusinessacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	11–12 October 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupils' performance, and information relating to governors' business and financial interests and their governance roles in other schools, on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about key stage 5 results and annual reports and accounts.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site provision at The CE Academy, Corby.
- Corby Business Academy is part of the Brooke Weston Trust. It serves Corby and the surrounding villages. Most pupils travel to and from the academy on a fleet of buses.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is slightly below

average.

- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an educational health care plan is well-above average.
- The school includes a unit offering specialist resourced provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This caters for 75 pupils with complex, moderate, severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties.

Information about this inspection

- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders and with other staff, governors and members of the trust.
- Inspectors observed parts of 55 lessons, some jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and a large sample of work from different subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils across different age groups, both formally and informally, and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils at break and lunchtimes. They also observed tutor periods.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including school improvement plans, the school's self-evaluation, governing body and trust minutes, performance information for all pupils and records of pupils' attendance, behaviour and welfare.
- Inspectors considered the 33 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 27 staff responses to Ofsted's questionnaire.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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