

Magnus Church of England Academy

Earp Avenue, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 4AB

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

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
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Some senior and middle leaders are very new to their role. In a short amount of time, these leaders have had a positive impact. Even so, they currently lack the experience and skills to drive the rapidly required school improvement.
- Leaders do not check the effectiveness of the support provided for disadvantaged pupils through the pupil premium. The support that disadvantaged pupils receive is inconsistent in quality, and in impact, as a result.
- The governing body has changed and new members have joined. They require further training in order to offer effective challenge.
- The school has experienced many changes in a short period of time. Relationships with some parents have suffered as a result.
- The achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and others is reducing, particularly in key stage 3, but remains too wide.
- While pupils' progress is improving quickly in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, still too few make good progress from their starting points.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good.
- Some pupils do not have the literacy skills they need to be as successful as they could be.
- The proportion of pupils that regularly fail to attend school is high compared to the national average.
- The number of exclusions is now declining but is still high.
- In 2016, students in the sixth form did not achieve at the levels they were capable of.
- Students, including those in the sixth form, do not yet have a way in which they can comment on their education, contribute their ideas or suggest improvements.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal has been pivotal in bringing about rapid school improvement. Her leadership has made a significant difference.
- The leadership of teaching is good. The quality of teaching is improving rapidly.
- The assistant principal with oversight of the sixth form has transformed the quality of this provision.
- The support from the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham Multi Academy Trust is good.
- The chair of the governing body knows the school well and is effective in the role.
- Pupils receiving their education in alternative provision make good progress and enjoy their learning.
- Many pupils behave well in their classes and around school. Pupils are polite, respectful and look smart in their uniform.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership by:
 - ensuring that all senior leaders have the skills required to play an effective role in accelerating school improvement
 - ensuring that all middle leaders play an effective role in accelerating pupils' progress
 - ensuring that the school's use of the pupil premium funding is monitored effectively to ensure that it leads to better progress for disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that the governing body receives high-quality training, particularly training to understand how well pupils are achieving.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - eradicating the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - ensuring that pupils' literacy needs are met; for example, that there are more opportunities for pupils to extend their writing and more opportunities for them to read, extract information and interpret text.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - reducing the number of pupils that regularly do not attend school
 - eradicating the incidents of poor behaviour that, although rare now, still exist
 - reducing further the number of pupils excluded from school.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - pupils' attainment and progress at key stage 4 and key stage 5 continue to improve and meet national expectations
 - disadvantaged pupils achieve at least as well as other pupils with the same starting points
 - pupils identified by the school as requiring special educational needs support achieve well from their starting points.
- Improve the quality of 16 to 19 provision by:
 - improving further the progress made by students in the sixth form
 - ensuring that the students in the sixth form have a voice and that their views contribute to further improvement.

An external review of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how effectively this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The principal joined the school in September 2016. Her leadership has been transformational and much has taken place to improve the school and the life chances of pupils. Nevertheless, improvements are recent and there remain issues to address in order that the school becomes a good school.
- Some members of the senior leadership team are new to the role. They have not yet received the leadership training and development required to conduct their role at the level and pace that is required in order that the school becomes a good school.
- There have been recent changes to the middle leadership of the academy, particularly at subject leadership level. Many of these leaders are stepping up to the challenge and are having positive impact, for example in mathematics and science. However, the quality of middle leadership is still too variable and as a result, pupils underachieve.
- Leaders have not done enough to check that the pupil premium helps to address the barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils experience. Support is in place. However, not enough is done to check that it is having the optimum impact. This means that the help that disadvantaged pupils receive is too variable in quality. Although improving, disadvantaged pupils continue to underperform, particularly in key stage 4.
- The principal has ensured that school policies are consistently applied. This increased the expectations of how pupils behaved and conducted themselves in school. This higher expectation was not introduced without difficulties. The relationship with some parents deteriorated. There are signs that this is improving, but relationships with parents still need to improve.
- Leaders have ensured that a suitable curriculum is in place. The curriculum has been adapted in order to address many of the learning needs of pupils. However, the curriculum does not ensure that pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, gain a broad view of the experiences and opportunities that exist outside of the school community.
- The additional funding intended to help Year 7 pupils who did not achieve a Level 4 in reading or mathematics at the end of key stage 2, has been used to provide extra help for these pupils. This additional support has been particularly successful in improving pupils' reading skills.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are increasingly having their individual needs met and additional government funding is used wisely to ensure that they make the expected progress.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils have timetabled opportunities to learn about life in modern Britain. The Christian ethos of the school underpins much of this work, including the safeguarding of pupils' welfare. However, pupils do not yet have an opportunity to contribute to leaders their views about their school.
- There are members of staff conducting leadership roles whose abilities are not being fully utilised and this is limiting the pace of improvement in some areas.
- Leaders choose carefully the alternative provision for pupils who are not educated within the main school. They monitor the progress and the attendance of these pupils regularly.

- Leaders hold all staff to account and the systems for this are rigorous. Performance management arrangements are well understood and are making a difference.
- The principal receives good support from the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham Multi Academy Trust. In particular, she receives high-quality school improvement help and advice from the chief executive of the trust.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is good. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving quickly. Pupils told inspectors that they appreciated that their lessons had recently 'really improved' and that they were receiving 'lots of help' from their teachers.
- The senior leader with oversight of the sixth form has driven dramatic change in a short amount of time. Students have benefited significantly from her excellent work.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school requires improvement.
- Governors have not made sure that the pupil premium is having the maximum impact on the eligible pupils.
- Some governors require further training in order to conduct their role effectively. For example, they do not yet have a good enough understanding of the new accountability measures at key stage 4. This means that their challenge to leaders is not sufficiently rigorous.
- The governing body is reconstituted. A new chair of the governing body is in place. This has been a good appointment. This leader knows the school well and has the skills required of this significant role.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders keep meticulous records of all issues concerning pupils' welfare. The arrangements for the recruitment of all staff are rigorous.
- Leaders and staff work with a great deal of determination and care in order to make sure that pupils are safe within school and that they receive the appropriate support if they require it. Work with outside agencies is good and pupils benefit as a result.
- Pupils told inspectors that they felt safe within their school. They said that there was nowhere within school that they would not feel safe to go.
- Pupils have timetabled opportunities to develop the skills required to keep themselves safe. This includes when online and when using the mobile phone. They learn about the ways in which individuals can be exploited, particularly when they are vulnerable. They said that bullying was rare within school and that issues were dealt with efficiently by their teachers.
- Pupils who receive their education in alternative provision receive high-quality support and are attending school much more regularly as a result.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although improving, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Inspectors saw pupils making good progress within English, mathematics and science.

Pupils made much less progress in history.

- Some pupils lack the literacy skills that they need. For example, pupils receive too few opportunities to learn how to produce high-quality extended writing. This limits pupils' ability to succeed as they should.
- Some pupils enter the school with reading skills far below those expected for their age. A range of support is in place for these pupils. Some of this support makes a dramatic difference and pupils quickly catch up to where they need to be. However, pupils' reading is still an area that requires improving, particularly for pupils within key stage 4 who require these skills in order to achieve well in their examinations.
- At times, opportunities are missed to address pupils' literacy errors, for example misspellings. This means that pupils continue to make the same mistakes.
- The leader in charge of teaching, learning and assessment has ensured that teachers receive high-quality professional development and coaching. The impact of this training is evident within lessons. For example, the recent focus on ensuring a prompt and productive lesson start is having a positive effect. Inspectors observed pupils enter their lesson, settle well to appropriate tasks and make good progress.
- Pupils receiving their education within the alternative provision are benefiting from high-quality learning experiences. Teachers plan precisely in order to meet these pupils' needs. This means that they receive appropriate challenge and support. Inspectors observed pupils making good progress in their English lessons. They observed pupils clearly enjoying and benefiting from their learning in the motor vehicle lessons.
- The special educational needs coordinator has worked successfully to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make expected progress from their starting points. The curriculum is now more appropriate for many of these pupils and as a result they are making better progress.
- Pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive good support from the additional adults who support their learning.
- The lead practitioner for English is undertaking much positive work to improve literacy across the curriculum. She has worked with school leaders and teachers to improve pupils' examination technique to good effect. She is very aware of the next steps that are needed to improve pupils' literacy skills and has shown that she has the ability to help drive this aspect of the school's work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement
- Previously, many pupils underachieved. This is improving. However, still not enough pupils have the experience of being a successful learner across the subjects that they study.
- Pupils said that there have been many changes since the arrival of the principal. They said that initially there were rules imposed that they did not like, including regarding

the use of their mobile telephones. They did say that although they still did not like some of the new rules, they appreciated why they were in place and in some circumstances felt safer as a result.

- Teachers take great care to support pupils, especially those who are vulnerable or in need of extra help. Parents said that many teachers go 'the extra mile' in order to support their child and that this makes a significant difference.
- The school's careers programme is increasingly effective. Pupils benefit now from support from independent careers advice. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported well to make their key stage 4 choices.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although improving, some lessons are still disrupted by a minority of pupils' poor behaviour. Pupils told inspectors that this was particularly the case at key stage 4 in middle-ability classes.
- The principal's more rigorous implementation of the school behaviour policy and uniform policy led to an increase in the number of pupils excluded from school. The number of exclusions is falling, but remains too high.
- The proportion of pupils that are persistently absent is still too high.
- The proportion of pupils attending school daily has improved and is now in line with the national average.
- A great deal of effective work takes place to ensure that the vast majority of pupils attend school. The education welfare officer works within the community and with local primary schools in order to plan support that helps pupils to attend school. She is well led by the assistant principal. She is aware that even more is required to ensure that parents value the school so that the level of persistent absence is reduced.
- The majority of pupils are well behaved and courteous. Pupils who spoke with inspectors were articulate and were able to express their views in a mature and measured fashion. Movement around the school is calm and is well managed by leaders.
- Every effort is made by leaders and by teachers to raise expectations for pupils in order that they succeed. It is no longer acceptable for them to misbehave, not attend school or not wear their uniform with pride. Every indication is that pupils are responding positively to these expectations and are making improving progress in their learning as a result.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, not enough pupils made good progress from their starting points. However, the academy did meet the government minimum standard for pupils' progress. A greater proportion of pupils achieved a grade C or above in English and mathematics than in previous years.
- In 2016, too few disadvantaged pupils, most-able pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs achieved as well as they could from their starting points.

- At key stage 4, although the difference is diminishing, disadvantaged pupils still do not achieve as well as other pupils within the school. They do not achieve as well as other pupils nationally in English and mathematics and science. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is much better in key stage 3.
- At key stage 4, the most recent information indicates a rapid improvement in pupil achievement in many subject areas, including in English, mathematics, science and geography. Pupils make much less progress in history.
- Work in pupils' workbooks indicates that current pupils are making rapid progress and beginning to achieve at least in line with the progress of pupils nationally from the same starting points. This is particularly the case in many English, mathematics and science lessons.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is effective in helping those who did not meet the required standards in their primary school. The programme to support key stage 3 pupils' reading is particularly successful.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The outcomes for pupils in 2016 were not good enough. The senior leader with the overview of the sixth form has very successfully rectified this situation for students currently within the provision. These students are now making better progress in lessons.
- Students do not have a formal process in order to share their views with leaders. These students have constructive things to say about the ways in which the sixth form provision could improve even further.
- The statutory work experience for pupils was not in place in the academic year 2015/16. This situation is now rectified. Work experience is in place for Year 13 students and is planned for Year 12 students.
- Students now receive professional and impartial advice in order to consider their next steps in education, employment or training. Students have access to online information regarding apprenticeships and receive application advice. Retention rates are improving.
- Students who did not gain a grade C or above in English or in mathematics at GCSE have lessons with subject specialists. The most recent results were not available during the inspection. However, pupils said that they appreciated the support that they received and that they were making good progress.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in the sixth form provision. Improvement planning is good and includes ambitious targets and regular checks of the actions being taken.
- There is a new and detailed sixth-form prospectus in place. This communicates well the clear curriculum pathways. It has good detail for key stage 4 pupils, highlighting the entry requirements for each course.
- Leaders are keen to raise expectations. A business uniform is now in place for all students in the provision. Students look extremely smart and act as role models for the rest of the school.

- There is improved rigour about students' independent study periods. These periods are timetabled and pupils are registered to ensure that they attend. These systems have improved the safety and welfare of pupils as previously students tended to go off the school site.
- Observations of learning made during the inspection identified that there were positive working relationships between students and their teachers. Questioning is used well to probe understanding and to extend students' thinking.

School details

Unique reference number	140549
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10023079

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	680
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	54
Appropriate authority	The academy trust
Chair	Martin O'Connell
Principal	Anna Martin
Telephone number	01636 680066
Website	www.magnusacademy.co.uk
Email address	office@magnusacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish on their website
- The school is part of the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham Multi Academy Trust.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is much higher than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much lower than the national average, as is the number of pupils with a statement of special needs or with an education, health and care plan.
- The school currently works with six alternative providers: MAPLE – Magnus Church of England Academy off-site provision, Hub – Magnus Church of England Academy modified curriculum, Catch 22, First Class Solutions, Tuxford Academy off-site provision and Hilt Holt Wood.
- The school did not meet the government’s current floor standards for pupils’ achievement at key stage 4 in 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons, some of which were observed jointly with senior school leaders.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books. A sample of the work of pupils in key stage 4 English and pupils' work in key stage 3 in a range of subjects was scrutinised.
- The lead inspector held a range of meetings, including with the principal, with senior leaders, the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham Multi Academy Trust
- Inspectors held meetings with the behaviour and achievement leads, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders in mathematics and science and the senior leader with oversight of the sixth form. Inspectors also spoke to the designated safeguarding lead, pastoral leaders, lead practitioners and the librarian with responsibility for accelerating pupils' reading. A meeting took place with the education welfare officer and her line manager.
- Inspectors spoke formally with groups of pupils. Some of these pupils were currently in key stage 4, some were currently in the sixth form and some had been identified to require special educational needs support or had previously exhibited challenging behaviour.
- An inspector visited the alternative provider, MAPLE. This provision caters for the needs of the majority of eligible pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils arriving at the school. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, between lessons and during breaktime and lunchtime. They observed tutor period and an assembly.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, performance information for all year groups, and records on behaviour, attendance, exclusions and pupils' safety and welfare. Documentation relating to pupil premium spending and the provision for these pupils was scrutinised.
- Inspectors considered 40 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered 55 responses from members of the school staff to the Ofsted online inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jayne Ashman, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Monk	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Sammy	Ofsted Inspector
Annabel Bolt	Ofsted Inspector

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