

The Nuneaton Academy

Radnor Drive, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV10 7PD

Inspection dates

19–20 September 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Work is often not fully matched to pupils' abilities, and sometimes provides them with too little challenge to sustain their interest. Teachers often do not plan carefully enough to meet the needs of the most able.
- Lessons are rarely planned to make consistently good use of pupils' time. In some cases, pupils are left briefly with nothing to do. Teachers do not reliably check on pupils' progress in lessons.
- Low-level disruption sometimes sets in when pupils do not have appropriate work to do. Teachers' management of pupils' classroom behaviour has improved, but remains inconsistent.
- In recent years, pupils have left the school with low levels of attainment, having made weak progress from their different starting points in almost all subjects.
- Since the last inspection, difficulties in the appointment of specialist staff contributed to low standards across the school in science, modern foreign languages and information technology.
- Some strategies for raising pupils' achievement, including that of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, have had limited impact to date.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent changes in governance have already helped leaders to improve the school's curriculum and appoint a full complement of specialist staff. As a result, the pace of improvement is quickening.
- Leaders have created a positive and cohesive school community. Established and recently appointed staff at all levels understand and are committed to current school plans and procedures.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Their behaviour at social times and in many lessons is good. Safeguarding procedures are effective.
- Inspection evidence showed that academic standards are rising, including in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' attendance is rising steadily, and is now in line with the national average.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - set work which is sufficiently challenging to help all pupils, especially the most able, make good progress
 - check effectively on pupils' progress during lessons, so that they can adapt the learning when appropriate
 - organise tasks so that pupils' time is always used productively.
- Raise expectations and tackle gaps in pupils' previous learning in those subjects where achievement has been particularly weak, including science, information technology and modern foreign languages.
- Deepen the impact of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that teachers apply the school's expectations for classroom behaviour consistently
 - evaluating promptly the impact of the school's actions to raise achievement, including those which support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and making appropriate adjustments.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The effectiveness of leadership and management continues to require improvement because progress in addressing some of the issues raised at the last inspection has been slow. In particular, leaders have not ensured that teachers set work which is reliably based on what pupils already know and understand. This continues to slow some pupils' progress and result in inattentive behaviour.
- The expenditure of the pupil premium and additional money provided for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has had only a patchy effect on raising these pupils' achievement. Although leaders have reviewed the success of past strategies, more recent actions have not yet had a decisive impact.
- During the last academic year, leaders spent the Year 7 catch-up premium to provide a separate class for pupils who entered the school with low levels of literacy and numeracy. Leaders acknowledge that although the premium helped to improve pupils' attainment in English and mathematics, it was not effective in promoting their overall progress.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's current strengths and weaknesses is realistic and detailed. Leaders' views of teaching jointly observed during the inspection were perceptive, and concurred with those of the inspectors.
- Over recent months, the academy trust has taken important steps to ensure that the schools in the trust support each other, and leaders have already taken considerable advantage of the opportunities which collaborative working provides. Leaders have made sound plans for the school's further improvement on this basis.
- Above all, leaders have tackled successfully the difficulties in recruitment which have blighted the school's progress, and appointed a full complement of specialist staff. Older pupils recognise the importance of this. Staff at all levels, including teachers who are at an early stage of their careers, spoke of the benefits of training held in conjunction with the other schools, and their enthusiasm for learning from their colleagues. Teachers check their judgements about the standard of pupils' work with teachers from other schools.
- Recent teaching appointments have enabled leaders to strengthen the school's curriculum, so that pupils study a broad range of subjects well suited to their abilities. Key stage 4 pupils have the opportunity to study one subject at another school in the trust, and pupils appreciate the additional choices that this provides. The school offers a range of extra-curricular activities in sport, the creative arts and, for example, public speaking, but few pupils who spoke to inspectors had taken advantage of these opportunities.
- Leaders have implemented a full programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Lessons, assemblies and visiting speakers address a wide variety of topics, including the dangers of extremism and the importance of tolerance. Leaders ensure that all pupils and their families receive personalised advice on choosing their key stage 4 courses. Thorough careers advice has helped to increase the proportion of pupils who take up further education and training so that it is above the national average.

- Both experienced middle leaders and those newly appointed have a shrewd understanding of their priorities, relishing the opportunity to establish the consistency in the quality of teaching that has been lacking. The staff are united in their support for the school's plans, and their desire to raise pupils' achievement.
- Leaders have continued to prioritise pupils' welfare, and check thoroughly on those pupils who attend alternative provision in a local college. Well-coordinated strategies have secured significant improvements in pupils' attendance.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- Representatives of the academy trust, and the school's own raising achievement board, hold leaders to account effectively for pupils' welfare and academic progress. They are ambitious for the future, and recognise that the pace of improvement has been slower than they would have liked. Both the trust and the board make good use of members' professional expertise, both in education and in other fields.
- Members of the raising achievement board visit the school regularly to make sure that they understand first-hand the impact of the decisions they make. They routinely ask pupils about their experience of school life, and use this consultation as the basis for some of their questions to leaders. Leaders provide the board with very detailed information about pupils' performance, and a range of leaders answer to the board for their role in school improvement.
- Board members ensure that they play an effective part in keeping pupils safe. They are well trained in managing the risks to young people, including those associated with extremism. On the rare occasion when leaders do not receive a satisfactory response from other agencies which protect children, governors press for a satisfactory outcome.
- The trust has established effective procedures for managing the performance of the principal and overseeing the performance of other staff. The raising achievement board checks carefully on how leaders spend the additional money the school receives to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and board members are aware of its limited impact to date.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's arrangements meet all statutory requirements. Leaders assess effectively local risks to pupils' safety and well-being. They ensure that staff, including those new to the school, are well trained, and provide updates on any changes to legislation or the circumstances of individual pupils.
- The school's culture is characterised by a strong commitment to the most vulnerable pupils, and staff are alert to any potential risks. Records are well maintained, and leaders work well with parents and other agencies which protect children. They are persistent until they know that pupils' needs are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement primarily because teachers do not reliably set work which is securely based on what pupils already know, understand and are able to do. As a result, at least some pupils in a number of classes make less progress than they should do, either because the work does not present a fresh challenge or, less commonly, because they struggle to understand the work.
- During the inspection, most teaching of the newly arrived Year 7 pupils sought to establish pupils' experience in primary school and to set work accordingly. However, in a minority of cases, the work was pitched at the wrong level.
- Teachers typically take some steps in the lesson to discover how well pupils are progressing, but these are sometimes not very effective. As a result, teachers give the class, or groups of pupils within the class, too long to complete a task, or fail to spot pupils who are stuck. Occasionally during the inspection, a number of pupils briefly had nothing to do. In these circumstances, teachers do not make the best use of pupils' time.
- When tasks are uninteresting or do not provide pupils with enough to think about, they sometimes become inattentive or engage in mildly disruptive behaviour. Teachers and pupils are aware of clear procedures for managing behaviour, but during the inspection staff did not apply these consistently.
- Inspection evidence showed that the quality of teaching in English and mathematics is rising, although it remains a little variable. In mathematics, pupils were encouraged to move on to more challenging work when they had grasped basic techniques. In key stage 4 English lessons, teachers explained clearly how pupils could maximise their marks on particular questions in their final examinations. Many key stage 3 pupils make good use of the school's library, and are keen to progress through a commercial reading scheme. Teachers often sought to develop pupils' literacy, for example by emphasising and spelling key terms.
- Teachers generally show good subject knowledge. New appointments to the science department have a sound understanding of their subject and of suitable methodologies for teaching science. The teachers' confidence has already given older pupils the encouragement to catch up and try to fulfil their potential.
- Adults acting as teaching assistants provide effective support in lessons to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They know the pupils well and help to break the learning down into manageable steps. Pupils reported that homework generally makes a valuable contribution to their learning. Additional teaching for those at risk of falling behind is effective.
- This term, leaders have introduced a new feedback policy in which pupils correct and extend their work in response to teachers' comments in lessons. While it is too early to assess the impact of the change, both pupils and staff told inspectors that the new procedures were identifying misconceptions effectively and encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for their own progress.
- During the inspection, teachers set high expectations for pupils in the majority of lessons. Relationships between teachers and pupils were often strong.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. A recent reorganisation has increased the time support staff have available to respond to pupils' social and academic needs, and the first indications are that pupils value the more individual attention they now receive.
- Procedures to keep pupils safe are effective. Pupils say that bullying is uncommon and that they have confidence that adults will resolve any social difficulties they may experience. Pupils feel safe in all areas of the large school site.
- The school teaches pupils how to be safe and healthy in many respects, including in the use of the internet. The school's website provides useful tips for parents on the subject. Pupils learn about the importance of mental and sexual health, and, in the younger years, how to keep safe on the roads. Leaders ensure that those pupils who attend alternative provision are safe and attend regularly.
- Leaders ensure that teachers address moral and social issues, including fundamental British values. Inspectors found that pupils had a sound understanding of the key ideas, such as the unacceptability of discrimination, but a variable understanding of some of the details and terminology. Lessons in religious education teach pupils effectively about a range of cultures and religious traditions.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally positive. They bring the right equipment to lessons and present their workbooks neatly. They recognise the steps that the school is taking to improve their education. For example, Year 11 pupils expressed their appreciation that science revision classes had already started after school. Nevertheless, a minority are reluctant to take up all the opportunities available to them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although pupils consistently told inspectors that behaviour has continued to improve since the last inspection, inattention and some low-level disruption persist in lessons.
- Unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons is strongly linked to work which fails to interest pupils or which does not provide them with enough to do. In these circumstances, a minority of pupils lack the self-discipline to concentrate. They do not ask the teacher for additional work or explain why they are stuck, but rather chat among themselves and then talk across the classroom discussion.
- Teachers do not apply the school's behaviour management policy consistently, and this is the source of some frustration for pupils. When teachers follow the policy, only a handful of pupils fail to respond appropriately.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school and at social times is typically good. They move sensibly around the site and are polite to each other, staff and visitors. They wear their uniforms with pride and respect the school's well-maintained facilities.
- Leaders keep detailed records of more serious incidents. These show that the rates of both fixed-term and permanent exclusions have reduced considerably, although both remain some way above the national average.

- Pupils' attendance has risen since the last inspection and is now in line with the national average. The attendance of vulnerable groups of pupils, while still a little below that of other pupils, has also risen.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because, although achievement is rising, attainment at the end of key stage 4 remains low. Progress across the school is inconsistent, and until recently it was weak in modern foreign languages and science.
- Many pupils enter the academy with attainment below that which is typical for their age. Those who left Year 11 in 2016, the latest year for which information has been published, did so with low attainment, having made progress which was below average overall and below average in each broad area of the curriculum. The progress disadvantaged pupils had made during their time in the school was a little weaker still.
- Detailed information supplied by the school about the end-of-year attainment of pupils in key stage 3 showed that achievement is rising. In many subjects, including mathematics and English, a high proportion of pupils met the school's academic expectations last academic year. The gap between the performance of boys and that of girls is closing. This information was in line with inspection evidence. Inspectors found that at the start of the new school year, teachers typically set appropriate expectations for the standard of pupils' work.
- The school's information and classroom evidence showed that the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is similar to that of other pupils in the school. This reflects the school's success in overcoming any barriers to learning, for example by reducing the number of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent or excluded. However, the expenditure of the pupil premium grant has yet to ensure that disadvantaged pupils in the school diminish the difference between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally.
- Historically, the progress of the most able pupils has been well below the national average. During the inspection, the most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, made strong progress where work was sufficiently challenging, but in too many instances teachers did not give sufficient consideration to how the most able might be required to think really hard and extend their ideas.
- Leaders acknowledge that the support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has in the past focused most strongly on meeting their emotional and social needs, and, as a result, the academic progress of these pupils has been variable. However, inspectors saw pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities consistently making strong progress during the inspection, because their in-class support was effective.
- Standards in science, information technology and modern foreign languages have been very low for some years, reflecting acute difficulties in appointing specialist teachers. There is evidence of improvement, but this has been slow. However, in the key subject of science, the inspection provided overwhelming evidence that, this term, strong leadership and appropriately qualified staff have established markedly higher expectations, to which pupils are responding well.

- Inspectors observed work of a high quality in art, physical education (PE) and design technology, areas in which pupils have historically performed better. Pupils who attend alternative provision typically make good progress given their starting points. However, there remains a legacy of underachievement in most areas of the curriculum for those currently in the older year groups. The progress of these pupils needs to be accelerated for them to be well prepared for the next stages in their education and training.

School details

Unique reference number	136158
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10037170

This inspection of the school 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 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	574
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Ann Melville
Principal	Simon Lomax
Telephone number	02476 341134
Website	www.nuneatonacademy.co.uk
Email address	info@nuneatonacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 March 2016

Information about this school

- The Nuneaton Academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school. It is one of four secondary schools in the locality sponsored by the Midlands Academy Trust.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is above average.
- Eighteen key stage 4 pupils attend alternative provision at North Warwickshire and Hinckley College. The large majority of these pupils attend the college to follow a vocational course one morning each week.
- There has been considerable staff turnover since the last inspection. Twelve teachers joined the school in September, including a head of mathematics and a head of

science, and the school is now fully staffed. The trust appointed an executive principal in January 2017 to work across the four schools in the trust.

- In 2016, the school did not meet the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 11. The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- In the 2016/17 academic year, some of the support to the school was provided by a national leader of education. Some of the current support is provided by a specialist leader of education.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 38 lessons and one learning walk. Eleven observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed an assembly and tutor time. Pupils were observed before school and at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders and class teachers. The lead inspector met with the chair of the raising achievement board and the executive principal.
- Four groups of pupils, two chosen at random, met with inspectors. Inspectors spoke with a large number of pupils informally.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' current workbooks in lessons and at a small sample of books retained from the last academic year. They considered a range of information about pupils' current and recent achievement.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included: development plans and evaluations of the school's progress; curriculum plans; reports to parents; policies; the minutes of meetings held by the trust and the raising achievement board; and anonymised information showing how the principal manages the performance of teachers. Inspectors also scrutinised records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed through the online Parent View questionnaire, and in particular the 10 responses made this academic year. They also took account of the 34 responses to the questionnaire for staff and the 27 questionnaires completed by pupils.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Dan Robinson	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Epton	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017