

The Elizabethan Academy

Hallcroft Road, Retford, Nottinghamshire DN22 7PY

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive. Pupils feel encouraged to engage in their learning, which helps them to make progress.
- Leaders, governors, staff and pupils are working collaboratively to realise the principal's ambitions for pupils' success.
- Pastoral support is very strong. Considerable emphasis is placed on all pupils' personal development and well-being. The school is welcoming, caring and inclusive.
- Leaders understand their roles and responsibilities. Senior leaders and middle leaders are being supported to further develop their effectiveness.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which, in most subjects, is used well to motivate and interest pupils.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is slightly lower.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of enriching activities that they actively engage in.
- Performance management is a strength of the school. Staff have clear and aspirational targets which they work hard to achieve.
- The use of homework is variable at the school and so not all pupils benefit from the wider learning.
- Pupils in all year groups in a range of subjects are making strong progress. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving considerably.
- Leaders have amended the curriculum to ensure that it meets pupils' differing needs. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported well via this curriculum. They make good progress.
- There are small pockets of weaker teaching in some subjects, such as science. Some work is not challenging enough, and the most able pupils do not always understand how to improve their work or achieve the highest grades.
- The advice and guidance students receive at sixth form are a strength. Students make strong progress over time and are well prepared for the next steps in their education, employment or training.
- Behaviour is good. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils wear their uniforms with pride and are happy at their school.
- Senior leaders and governors are working well in ensuring that the pupil premium spending is having impact. However, the impact of Year 7 catch-up funding is not as carefully tracked as it could be.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers in all subjects plan activities which will meet the needs of all groups of pupils
 - the most able pupils understand what they need to do to achieve the highest grades
 - teachers routinely apply the school’s feedback policy to ensure that pupils have time to respond and improve their work
 - the teaching of science improves so that all pupils in this subject can achieve their expected progress
 - homework is used effectively by all teachers so that pupils can continue to learn within and beyond the classroom.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all middle leaders take a greater responsibility for leading improvements in their subject areas
 - the developments in science continue to be a focus for leaders at the school so that the progress made by pupils matches that of mathematics and English
 - Year 7 catch-up funding is carefully monitored and challenged to ensure that it is having impact.
- Improve pupils’ personal development, behaviour and welfare by improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils so that it is at least in line with national averages.
- Improve the quality of sixth-form provision by ensuring that students have a greater understanding of the purpose and impact of the school’s own tutor programme.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Staff have high morale. They are proud to work at the school and feel that leaders support them in a variety of ways. This includes providing training to meet their individual needs.
- Leaders have high expectations for all. They set ambitious targets for pupils' achievement. These targets link well with how leaders diligently manage teachers' performance. The principal sets high standards for all staff, and the career opportunities creatively provided by the school are appreciated.
- The principal is ably supported by many of the senior leaders in the school. This senior leadership team has a determined attitude to transform the lives of pupils at the school.
- The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to widen and develop their life experiences. The extra-curricular programme is extensive, offering a variety of cultural, artistic and sporting activities. Pupils are encouraged to participate in enriching experiences, such as the percussion ensemble and crochet club. Pupils appreciate and enjoy all the opportunities provided.
- Leaders of teaching, learning and assessment have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in this area of the school's work. Leaders' evaluation informs staff training and development, which has improved the quality of teaching.
- While many of the responses from parents and carers who replied to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive, some raised concerns about the quality of teaching and staffing in science. The principal agrees that teaching in this subject needs to improve further and has ensured that colleagues are being 'buddied up' with the best practitioners in the school.
- The principal has a sharp understanding of the current quality of education provided by the school. She is aware of what is working well and what has not been effective. She has worked with leaders to prioritise the right actions needed to further improve the outcomes of the school. Leaders have had roles and responsibilities redefined so that the progress of pupils can meet and, in some cases, exceed expectations.
- Leaders use the funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to help them make strong progress over time. The additional adults who provide support for these pupils do not do their work for them. They expect pupils to work hard, but provide good support when needed.
- Leaders prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. This is because pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is improved in a range of ways. One pupil's views mirrored those of their peers when they said: 'There is lots of community in this school. We all get on with each other and you can be who you want to be here, as it is an inclusive school.'

Governance of the school

- Governors share the leaders' ambitions for pupils' success. They are passionate about the school and are fully committed to supporting continued improvements.

- Governors understand the requirements and responsibilities of their role. They are actively involved in supporting aspects of the school's work, not only in their strategic capacity, but by attending many of the school's events. They are also keen to develop and are active in a variety of relevant training that will support the development of the school.
- There is a wide range of knowledge and expertise among the governing body, and the chair of governors ensures that all skill sets are matched to meet the needs of the school. There are regular committee and full governing body meetings, where governors ask challenging questions to hold senior leaders to account.
- Governors are a true 'critical friend' to the school. They hold several accountability meetings known to the school as 'CSI'. At these meetings, governors question underperformance, but also support the principal in dealing with the challenges faced by the school. However, they have acknowledged that they have not been as diligent in challenging leaders on the impact of Year 7 catch-up funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding leader is well supported by a team of safeguarding officers, pastoral support staff and form tutors. Leaders have developed a very positive relationship with parents and families, which further supports the work of the school.
- Staff are well trained and fully recognise their responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils. The weekly safeguarding updates allow for all staff to keep up to date with developments and concerns.
- The school's careful tracking and monitoring of any safeguarding concerns is well led and managed. The designated safeguarding lead is tenacious in ensuring that rapid action is taken, so that any pupils who are at risk get the support they need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Many teachers use targeted questioning well to probe and develop pupils' understanding. This skilful questioning helps pupils to think carefully about what they are learning. An example of this was seen in a food technology lesson, where the teacher's questions reinforced pupils' knowledge and understanding of the importance of balanced nutrients.
- Teachers use their understanding of the pupils' needs to plan well-structured lessons. This, alongside positive relationships between staff and pupils, creates a purposeful environment, conducive to learning.
- Most teachers use information about what pupils can achieve and plan tasks that challenge them. A whole-school priority has been to plan activities of varying challenge. However, in some lessons, pupils can select the learning task and not all teachers routinely check that pupils have selected appropriately. This means that sometimes the most able are not sufficiently challenged and the least able are not effectively supported.
- Homework is inconsistently used to consolidate learning. Not all teachers set work that

allows for pupils to learn beyond the classroom. However, when it is set and well planned, pupils value the learning activities. One pupil summed up the views of others by explaining that 'decent homework makes sure you have learned things properly or that you go to lessons more prepared.'

- Teachers are very encouraging and support pupils to develop their confidence. In some lessons pupils are beginning to take risks in their learning. They are prepared to 'have a go', even if this means that they make mistakes. An example of this was seen in an English lesson where pupils were challenging each other on revision techniques for 'A Christmas Carol'.
- The most able pupils do not know how to meet the requirements of the higher grades in all the subjects they are studying, especially at key stage 4. Increasing the proportion of pupils who achieve the higher grades has already been identified as a priority by leaders, and plans are in place to bring about improvements.
- Teachers maintain an up-to-date 'teacher file' which details the profile of the classes that they teach. Teachers use the assessment information collected to make any relevant changes to support learning, for example a change in seating plans to allow for specific group work to take place.
- Teaching has been particularly strong over time in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Teaching in science is not as strong, but is improving. Teachers in this subject are working with best practitioners to develop further.
- Teachers develop pupils' reading skills effectively in lessons and through the school's dedicated 'drop everything and read' (DEAR), which is a daily routine. Pupils viewed this as an effective use of their time, and one pupil reflected that without it he would not 'read as much'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The strong sense of community across the school ensures that differences are recognised and celebrated. All pupils feel proud to be at the school, and the view that it is a 'true' inclusive school is felt by the majority.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They take pride in their work and appearance.
- Pupils feel safe at school and know whom they should approach if they have any concerns. They say that bullying is extremely rare, but are confident that it would be dealt with swiftly and effectively should it occur.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative, off-site provision are well supported to promote their personal development and well-being. External providers praised the school for its regular contact and stated that the school 'genuinely' cares about the progress of its most vulnerable pupils.
- A cohesive programme of careers education, throughout the school, is effective in preparing pupils, including those at risk of disengagement, for the next steps of their education, employment or training.

- Leaders have ensured that pupils follow a personal development programme called 'life', which is taught during curriculum time. Through this programme, pupils learn about the wider world and their understanding of it. An example of this was seen in a Year 9 'life' lesson where pupils were debating their understanding of the differences between an asylum seeker and a refugee.
- The rewards system at the school is a strength; pupils speak fondly about their reward cards and the principal's award. The number of rewards is celebrated through the school's house assemblies, which also develop pupils' cultural understanding of the wider world. An example of this was the effective assembly on 'the power of music', presented through the theme of 'international jazz day'. Pupils learned about the influence jazz has had on modern music and were also tasked with speaking to their parents and grandparents about the music they listened to growing up.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of diversity. They are respectful of the views that differ from their own. The school is extremely welcoming and inclusive.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and want to learn and be in school. Pupils behave sensibly and safely. Corridors are calm and orderly. The communal areas are a safe place for pupils to meet friends and socialise.
- Pupils are respectful of themselves and others. They are welcoming to visitors and speak highly of the support that they receive at the school. Pupils are proud of their school and will often be asked to tour visitors round, unaccompanied by staff.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average and improving. The attendance for disadvantaged pupils, however, remains slightly below the national average, and leaders are working with staff, pupils and families to raise the attendance of these young people.
- Persistent absence has declined due to creative programmes on offer by the school. The well-led breakfast club ensures that pupils not only receive a healthy breakfast but they are also learning about the daily news, which demonstrates the school's continued efforts to educate pupils at all given opportunities.
- Effective pastoral support and secure behaviour-management systems mean that exclusions are used as a last resort. Rates of fixed-term exclusions have decreased, and internal exclusions are used sparingly and on a case-by-case approach.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Current pupils, in all year groups, are making strong progress in a range of subjects. Work in pupils' books, assessment files and leaders' tracking information indicate that pupils' outcomes in 2018 will exceed those achieved in previous years. The work in books seen by inspectors supports this.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved in key stage 3. Pupils are now entering their chosen GCSEs better prepared for the demands of these qualifications. The expectations for future cohorts are high. The effective use of the

whole school's mark book allows for leaders to track and intervene rapidly at all key stages.

- Considerable work has been undertaken, particularly since the principal's appointment, to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. These groups of pupils are making faster progress than has been seen in the past. The drive to further improve teaching is supporting these pupils in achieving their potential. There is no visible difference in the quality of work and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils who are currently in the school compared to others.
- Pupils who entered the school with literacy and numeracy levels below those typical for their age are supported to catch up with their peers. Leaders acknowledge that further work is needed to ensure that there is an effective approach to tracking the progress of the literacy and numeracy intervention.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved a strong pass in English and mathematics in 2017 was slightly above the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils have made less progress than other pupils nationally in the past. In 2017, their outcomes in languages and science were below national averages and overall were below in English and mathematics.
- The most able pupils made less progress than others in the past and is what is expected of them. Leaders are aware of this, and plans are in place to improve the rates of progress for this group of pupils.
- Year 11 pupils made less progress in science, and leaders are taking appropriate actions to support improvement; current progress is strong.
- Pupils are well supported for their next steps in education or employment. The very small minority of pupils who are unable to succeed in mainstream school are well supported to secure appropriate pathways to continue and further their education.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The sixth form is currently part of a consortium arrangement with neighbouring schools, although this will cease at the end of this academic year and 16 to 19 study programmes for students will be solely led and taught at the school.
- The sixth form is small, with 125 students in total from the school accessing various level 3 qualifications.
- Students enjoy being in the sixth form. They say that teachers know them well and that they benefit from small class sizes. The subject knowledge of teachers is a strength and skilfully used to enable students to learn. A good example of this was seen in a Year 13 English lesson, where students were analysing and evaluating how language features are used to create meaning.
- The areas that the school lead on as part of the consortium is a strength of the 16 to 19 education.
- Students are prepared well to learn about a range of career options, including apprenticeships and university. The proportion of students who move on to further and higher education is above the national average, and 11% of students went on to

Russell Group universities.

- Students receive relevant feedback which allows them to make strong progress. Students believe and feel that the teachers know and understand their learning needs and they are appreciative of this.
- Although very few students need to resit GCSE English and mathematics, those who do make the progress required.
- The school meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes. All students have access to and are involved in some form of work-related learning or experience.
- Students participate in a tutor programme which covers a range of subjects to support them in taking the next steps in their education, employment or training. However, to support students' next steps, topics such as UCAS applications need to be sooner in their journey as a Year 12 student.
- The pastoral support is strong in the sixth form. Tutors know their students well, and positive relationships support students' personal development and well-being.
- Students' conduct and attitudes to learning are exemplary, and the school believes that when sixth-form education is taught at their school this will aid in developing aspirations for the younger pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	138076
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10047548

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	957
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	125
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Dr Derek Cheetham
Principal	Christine Horrocks
Telephone number	01777 713700
Website	www.elizabethan.notts.sch.uk
Email address	head@elizabethan.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 March 2014

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is average.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site alternative provision at 'Stonesoup'.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The number of in-year admissions is higher than average. This has been attributed to

the large multi-academy trust schools which are local to The Elizabethan Academy.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is slightly below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 43 lessons, many jointly with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, other staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and a sample of pupils' books.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lessons, before school, at breaktime and at lunchtime. Inspectors also observed pupils' learning and behaviour in assemblies and tutor time.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils, from all year groups, in discussions and informally around the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in extra-curricular activities.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, its improvement plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, external visit reports, information about the attainment and progress of all pupils, records relating to behaviour and safeguarding, and information on the school's website.
- Inspectors also considered the 83 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and free-text responses from parents and carers. They also considered the results of the school's own surveys completed by pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Sally Wicken, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Croft	Ofsted Inspector
Russell Barr	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Spoons	Ofsted Inspector

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