

Sirius Academy West

296 Anlaby Park Road South, Hull HU4 7JB

Inspection dates

6–7 November 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Recent outcomes at GCSE level have been below the national average. This is across a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. As a result of new leaders' actions, outcomes are beginning to improve.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in the main school and pupils who are disadvantaged achieve outcomes which are below the national averages for other pupils.
- The quality of teaching and learning is variable within and between subjects and in both key stages. While there are some strengths in teaching across the school, inconsistencies are limiting the rate of pupils' progress.
- At times, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Although the new leaders are raising the aspirations of pupils and staff, there are still pockets of teaching where the level of challenge is not high enough.
- Sometimes, teachers' use of questions does not enable pupils to make strong progress. At times, teachers' questioning leaves some pupils behind and misunderstandings go uncorrected.
- The new curriculum is beginning to engage pupils more in their learning. However, leaders recognise that there is work to do to ensure that the necessary building blocks of skills, knowledge and understanding are embedded.
- As the result of effective leadership, students following the 16 to 19 study programme achieve outcomes which are above the national averages in both academic and applied general A levels.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed head of school and other new leaders have a clear determination to improve the school. The quality of teaching is improving and a new curriculum has been put in place.
- Leaders of the multi-academy trust took quick and decisive action to address weaknesses in outcomes. The changes have been rapid and there is capacity for continued improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and show consideration and courtesy. The school is a tolerant, orderly community. Rates of pupils' attendance are improving and the use of fixed-term exclusion of pupils from school is reducing.
- The quality of education and leadership in the local authority resourced provision for pupils who have a hearing impairment is good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further secure consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - ensuring that teachers' planning enables pupils from different starting points, including those with SEND and who are disadvantaged, to be challenged in their work
 - making sure that all teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high
 - eliminating the variability in the effectiveness of teachers' use of questions, so that pupils' misunderstandings are picked up and corrected.
- Rapidly further embed the new curriculum, so that pupils' outcomes improve, by:
 - monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of how pupils grasp vital concepts and make progress within subjects
 - enabling a wider range of pupils to access appropriately matched courses and so reducing the necessity for the school's use of alternative education provision.
- Continue to increase the effectiveness of leaders new to their roles by:
 - ensuring that they have access to high-quality training, support and challenge
 - enabling them to learn from established and successful leaders so that good practice can be shared.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since his appointment in January 2018, the head of school has set about a systematic improvement of the school. He has an unwavering commitment to raising the aspirations of both pupils and staff. As a result of the head of school's actions, an ambitious culture is growing quickly. Expectations are rising among both pupils and staff.
- There has been a period of substantial turbulence in the leadership of the school, following the disappointing GCSE results in 2017. Leaders of the multi-academy trust (the trust) took firm and speedy action to address this decline. As a consequence, several senior and middle leaders left the school during 2017/18. Although it is very early days, new leaders have quickly started taking the necessary steps to improve pupils' outcomes. The trust leaders and senior leaders are rightly securing further support for leaders who are recently appointed to their roles.
- In the short time since the head of school's appointment, he has taken immediate and decisive action to address the decline in pupils' outcomes. For example, he has put in place a new curriculum to better meet the needs of pupils. A new key stage 3 curriculum has been introduced, so that the building blocks necessary for success in key stage 4 are starting to be in place. He has removed inappropriate qualifications in key stage 4 so that additional time can be devoted to core subjects, such as mathematics. Pupils now have a wider choice of subjects to choose from, enabling them to follow a curriculum which is more appropriate to their needs. Pupils have welcomed the new curriculum. They told inspectors that behaviour has improved because of it, a view supported by the school's behaviour logs.
- It is early days for the new key stage 3 curriculum, however. As such, it is occasionally less clear how pupils will acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding and make effective progress, for example in humanities and in personal, social, health and economic education.
- Leaders are determined that the new key stage 3 curriculum and the more appropriate choice of courses at key stage 4 will reduce the substantial use of alternative education provision, which is currently and recently the case for Years 10 and 11. It is encouraging that, as a result of the new curriculum, a smaller proportion of key stage 3 pupils than key stage 4 are presently accessing alternative education provision. Leaders are aware that there is still work to do to further reduce the necessity of alternative education provision.
- The head of school has introduced a rigorous system for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching. As a result, leaders have an accurate picture of the standard of teaching and act quickly when areas for improvement are identified. Although there is more to do to secure consistently good teaching, the monitoring, evaluation and review process is leading to improving teaching.
- Teachers speak positively about the renewed sense of purpose which new leaders have instilled among staff. They value the bespoke professional development which is provided as a consequence of the monitoring, evaluation and review process. While it is a work in progress, pupils recognise the improvements in teaching which have taken

place since the appointment of the head of school and other new leaders.

- New leaders have undertaken a root and branch overhaul of the use of the additional funding for the pupil premium. Plans for the use of this funding are detailed and appropriate. Although it is early days and too soon to see the full effect of leaders' actions, there are encouraging signs that their use of the funding is bringing about improvements. For instance, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is improving and teachers are more conscious of disadvantaged pupils when planning lessons.
- Leaders ensure that there is a rich wider curriculum available to pupils, particularly through sport and the creative arts. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain through a range of activities, events, visitors to school and lessons. As a result, the school is a tolerant and considerate community.
- Leadership of the local authority resource provision for pupils who have a hearing impairment is good. Aspirations for what these pupils can achieve are high. Carefully planned support and good-quality professional development of staff within the resource base have ensured that pupils make strong progress and that their needs are met.

Governance of the school

- Trust leaders acted swiftly following the poor GCSE outcomes in 2017. They dissolved the local governance board and replaced it with an interim management board. Trust leaders have recruited appropriately skilled governors to this board, so that they can support and challenge school leaders. Trust leaders have supported the chief executive officer and head of school in taking the tough decisions required to improve pupils' outcomes.
- Trust leaders have acted to further increase the effectiveness of governors. To this end, they have secured external scrutiny of governors' work as an added check and balance.
- Members of the trust and governors of the interim management board have an accurate understanding of the challenges facing the school, its strengths and its weaknesses. Sharper monitoring systems introduced by the head of school mean that governors receive focused and accurate reports of the effect leaders are having on improving the school. Minutes of governors' meetings show that governors ask appropriate and challenging questions of leaders.
- Governors have a clear understanding of their role in creating and maintaining an ongoing culture of safeguarding vigilance. A specific governor for safeguarding meets regularly with the designated safeguarding leader and reports are provided to the interim management board.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safeguarding arrangements in the resourced provision for pupils who have a hearing impairment are also effective.
- Checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are carried out and the necessary records are kept assiduously.
- Leaders tasked with responsibility for child protection ensure that there are effective

links with external agencies and other professionals. Records are detailed, with clear identification of pupils' needs and the actions taken as a result.

- Staff receive regular training about safeguarding matters. This includes the types of abuse and the signs to look out for, the risks associated with children who go missing from education, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. The staff have received the appropriate training about keeping children safe in education and protecting them from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They value the 'lockdown' drills and fire drills which have taken place. Pupils said that they know who to go to if they are worried and that their worries are taken seriously.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although there is some very effective teaching as the result of leaders' recent actions, the quality of it is variable within and between subjects and across year groups. Many pupils benefit from good teaching, but this is inconsistent. In English, mathematics and science, for example, at times pupils make strong gains in their learning. At other times, their progress is less marked. In discussion with inspectors, pupils described this same, variable picture.
- Such inconsistency is often characterised by the level of challenge demanded by the tasks set. Sometimes, teachers' expectations and hence pupils' work are not pitched at the right level to enable pupils, including the disadvantaged and those with SEND, to make strong progress. When this happens, pupils are passive and compliant but not as engaged in their learning as they could be. This is the case at times, for instance, across English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, technology and physical education. Leaders have identified the further raising of levels of challenge as a priority.
- Teachers' use of questioning does not consistently enable pupils to grasp new knowledge. At times, questions are asked of a small group of pupils, often the ones who willingly volunteer their answers. This results in numbers of pupils being less involved in the learning and as a result making less progress.
- On occasions, teachers do not check that pupils have grasped the learning point before moving on to the next step. As a consequence of this, pupils are sometimes left behind in their understanding and struggle to keep pace with the teaching. This variability in checking pupils' understanding also leads to misconceptions taking hold, which remain uncorrected.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is mostly secure and helps pupils make strong progress, for example in geography, business studies, art and music. In a minority of teaching, for example in English and science, teachers' subject knowledge is less secure and pupils' understanding is limited as a result.
- Leaders' actions have led to an improvement in the quality of pupils' presentation of work in their books. For the majority of the time, standards of presentation are high, showing the effectiveness of leaders' strategies to raise teachers' and pupils' expectations.
- Teaching in the resourced provision for pupils who have a hearing impairment is

strong. Trained staff are expert at ensuring that pupils are effectively supported. The wide range of skilfully provided intervention strategies makes sure that pupils are able to access learning across the curriculum. Pupils make strong progress as a result of effective in-class support in mainstream lessons, such as in modern foreign languages.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The personal development and welfare of pupils who attend the resourced provision for hearing impairment is good.
- Leaders have recently introduced new assessment systems at key stages 3 and 4, so that pupils' progress can be more accurately monitored. As a consequence of the new systems, pupils are increasingly confident in their understanding of what they need to do to improve their work or skills. The majority of the pupils who spoke to inspectors could say what their target grades were in each subject and also what they needed to do to improve.
- Heightened expectations have led to the improving of pupils' attitudes towards learning. Pupils commented favourably on the amount and quality of homework which is expected of them. They are positive about the availability of staff to help them in lunchtime and after-school study sessions. As one pupil put it, 'There is always someone here to help.' Another commented that, 'This year there has been more help.'
- There is a wide range of provision which supports pupils' physical and emotional well-being. Pupils are complimentary about the steps leaders take to keep them safe. For example, recent visitors to school have included the fire service in advance of bonfire night and the education charity 'Prison Me No Way!' Pupils receive information and training on how to stay safe online.
- Pupils are supported in their career aspirations and planning through a comprehensive careers education, information, advice and guidance programme. For instance, in Year 8, pupils are introduced to the world of engineering. Regular careers-related events in school and a careers fair are valued by pupils in raising their expectations of themselves.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare in the school. They said that when it happens, it is taken seriously by staff and is dealt with. Pupils know that there is always an adult they can go to. Pupils said that when discriminatory language is used, it is also taken seriously and, as evidence of this, is dealt with by senior staff.
- In the resourced provision for pupils who have a hearing impairment, leaders ensure that there is effective support for pupils' personal welfare and development. There are strong links with parents and carers, so that they can support their child at home. A bespoke programme of personal, social, health and economic education is in place to meet the needs of pupils. This includes appropriate life skills accredited qualifications.
- A number of pupils attend an alternative education provider as a means of supporting them in their behaviour and meeting their curricular needs. A comprehensive curriculum is in place which supports their personal development and welfare,

delivered by staff with the appropriate skills. All pupils have a key worker responsible for coordinating each pupil's support and education programme. There are clear processes in place for communication between leaders at both schools so that prompt action is taken should there be safeguarding concerns.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The behaviour of pupils who attend the resourced provision for hearing impairment is good.
- During the inspection, inspectors saw no disruptive behaviour in lessons or around the school site. At social times, pupils conducted themselves with consideration towards others and respected the school environment. For example, at lunchtime, pupils placed all litter in the receptacles provided. All of the pupils spoken to by inspectors were polite and courteous.
- Pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved during the last year as a result of changes introduced by leaders. Leaders' records of pupils' behaviour show a declining number of incidents. The use of fixed-term exclusions is below the national average.
- Leaders have prioritised attendance as an area for improvement. Following leaders' implementation of an action plan, attendance has improved and is now close to the national average. Persistent absence remains slightly above the national average, but after concerted action, has improved in the last year by a substantial margin.
- The attendance of pupils who attend the resourced provision for hearing impairment is very close to the main school figure. Although it is a small number of pupils, this is a laudable achievement considering the medical-related absences which are unavoidable.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2017, GCSE results were below the national average for progress in English, mathematics and the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects of science, modern foreign languages, history and geography. Provisional outcomes information for GCSE results in 2018 suggests a similar picture of below-average progress across the same subjects. Leaders readily acknowledge that these outcomes are not good enough.
- In 2017 and 2018, progress for pupils who are disadvantaged and those with SEND was below the national average.
- Since the appointment of the new head of school, there are signs that outcomes are beginning to improve. Observation of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' books across a range of subjects and years show that many pupils are now making better progress. This is inconsistent, however. Where teachers' expectations are not challenging enough, or where planning does not take pupils' starting points into account, then pupils' progress is less strong. This is evident in key stages 3 and 4, in a range of subjects and within subjects.
- In a variety of subjects, many pupils in different years are making gains in their learning, for example in English, mathematics, science and humanities. Progress is also evident in business studies, physical education, art and music. From their starting

points, this includes pupils who are disadvantaged or with SEND.

- At other times, following leaders' actions to prioritise pupils' opportunities to write extended pieces, there is strong evidence of this taking place. In English, art and science, for instance, pupils are making clear gains in their progress.
- From their starting points, pupils who attend the resourced provision for hearing impairment make strong progress, for example in history, science, art and German. Where specific interventions are used, such as to assist pupils' reading skills, substantial improvements are made as a result. The effective staff who support hearing impaired pupils make a positive contribution to the strong progress being made. They know their pupils well.
- Leaders' actions to improve the rates of pupils progressing to an appropriate next step at the end of Year 11 have led to a substantial improvement. Following several years when a smaller proportion of pupils than the national average progressed to further education or training, the proportion is now well above the national average.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Outcomes at the end of 2017/18 for students participating in A-level courses are above the national averages for both academic and applied general subjects. They were also above the national averages in 2016/17.
- Outcomes for students retaking GCSE English are strong and are well above the national average for the proportion of students who improve their grade. The numbers of students retaking mathematics are too small for a comparison with the national average to be made.
- Leaders have worked effectively to ensure that students commence appropriate courses at the start of their 16 to 19 study programme. As a result of the effective guidance students receive, the number of students who complete their study programmes has increased substantially and is now above the national average.
- Students are supported in their preparedness for life beyond the sixth form by the work experience programme. This is a bespoke package, determined by the students' interests and career aspirations. In addition to traditional work-based placements, students are given effective careers advice, guidance and support through a range of in-school opportunities and events.
- A varied programme of enrichment is in place which serves to support students' personal development and welfare. In addition to a programme of activities related to higher education applications, students fulfil leadership roles in the main school, participate in some team sports and complete the extended project qualification. A planned programme of personal, social, health and economic education is in place, which is adapted as required in response to matters which arise, or students' requests for a topic to be addressed.
- As a consequence of good outcomes, effective guidance onto appropriate study programmes and high expectations, the rates of students progressing to next step destinations has increased and is above the national average. In 2017/18, a higher proportion of students than in previous years were successful in entering Russell Group

universities.

- The leadership of the provision in the sixth form is strong. Over time, leaders are effective in establishing effective teaching and in securing good outcomes. A climate of high expectations is embedded, as evidenced in improved destinations for students and an increase in the proportion of students who progress to the more competitive universities.
- The quality of teaching in 16 to 19 study programmes is consistently effective across the range of subjects the majority of the time. Typically, it is characterised by teachers' planning which effectively meets the needs of students from different starting points, including those who are disadvantaged. Students told inspectors that they receive a high level of individualised support from teachers as soon as it emerges that they are falling behind.
- Where teaching is less effective, it is typified by inconsistent checking on the extent to which students have grasped the learning point before the teacher moves on. On these occasions, misconceptions arise and are left uncorrected.

School details

Unique reference number	135945
Local authority	Kingston Upon Hull City Council
Inspection number	10052646

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 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	1,553
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	121
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Neil Porteus
Headteacher	Edward Vickerman
Telephone number	01482 352 939
Website	www.sirius-academy.org.uk/
Email address	info@siriusacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 April 2014

Information about this school

- The school converted to academy status in September 2009. It joined The Constellation Trust, a multi-academy trust, in April 2015. The trust members delegate responsibility for governance of the school to a trust board. An interim management board has been established to provide communication to the trust board. The trust board retains responsibility for the oversight and governance of the school.
- The school hosts a local authority resourced provision for pupils who have a hearing impairment. This currently caters for nine pupils.

- The school has links with one alternative education provider, the Rise Academy.
- Since the previous inspection, substantial changes in staffing have taken place. The headteacher at the time of the previous inspection is now the executive headteacher and the chief executive officer of the trust. The head of school was appointed on an interim basis in January 2018 and substantively in March 2018. The previous head of school left in December 2017. A number of changes to the senior leadership team have been made since the appointment of the new head of school. These include the appointment of two deputy headteachers, one in September 2018, and a leader for the pupil premium funding from September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- During this inspection, inspectors observed teaching in a wide range of subjects and years. At times, they were accompanied by senior leaders.
- Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised, both in lessons and as part of work scrutinies.
- Meetings were held with the chief executive officer of the trust, the chair of the trust board and members of the interim management board. Inspectors met with: the head of school and other senior leaders; a group of middle leaders; a group of teachers at different career points and a group of non-teachers. An inspector spoke on the telephone with a member of the trust board. An inspector met the leader of the alternative provider of education used by the school.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils from different years and with students from the sixth form. Inspectors spoke with pupils around the site at social times.
- A range of school documentation was evaluated. This included: leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans; records of the quality of teaching; pupils' progress information; records of governors' meetings and records of external evaluation of the school. Leaders' logs of behaviour, exclusion, bullying and attendance were scrutinised.
- Documentation and records relating to safeguarding and child protection were examined, including open case files of referrals to children's services and the school's records of the checks carried out on staff who work in, or visit, the school.

Inspection team

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