

Shirebrook Academy

Common Lane, Shirebrook, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG20 8QF

Inspection dates

26–27 March 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across and within subjects. As a result, pupils' progress is inconsistent.
- Over time, the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and of boys has not been good enough. Systems to monitor the progress of pupils with SEND lack rigour.
- The impact of subject leaders' work in improving the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent.
- Teachers do not consistently use information about pupils' progress to plan learning that engages and challenges the most able pupils.
- Some teachers do not have consistently high expectations of what all pupils can achieve.
- Leaders have not used effectively additional government funding to help Year 7 pupils who require numeracy support to catch up.
- Teachers do not all follow the school's policy on feedback. Some teachers do not provide pupils with clear guidance as to how they can improve their work.
- Teachers' questioning is not consistently effective in checking pupils' knowledge and deepening their understanding.
- Some pupils do not take enough pride in the presentation of their work, particularly boys and least-able pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The trust provides school leaders with effective support and challenge.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the pupils within the local context.
- Pastoral leaders monitor the most vulnerable pupils closely. They work with parents and carers to provide these pupils with additional support.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving across most year groups.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Pupils adopt positive attitudes to learning. They behave well in lessons and around the school site. The proportion of pupils excluded from school is below the national average.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and reduce the risks they may face.
- Overall, pupils' attendance is above the national average.
- Leaders provide a comprehensive and well-planned careers programme that raises pupils' aspirations.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the school's systems for assessing and monitoring the progress of pupils with SEND are much sharper so that the information informs future decisions for these pupils
 - leaders' plans bring about the necessary improvements in the progress of key pupil groups, particularly pupils with SEND and boys
 - leaders monitor and record the impact of their use of additional funding closely to improve the mathematical skills of those pupils who are eligible to receive the Year 7 catch-up funding
 - all subject leaders continue to develop their skills in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning within their areas of responsibility.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils, particularly those with SEND and boys, make strong progress by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations of what all pupils can achieve
 - use accurate and realistic assessment information to set pupils work that provides sufficient and appropriate challenge, including those pupils who are most able
 - use questioning consistently well to check pupils' knowledge and understanding so that their learning is secure
 - provide closer support to pupils with SEND so that they can catch up with other pupils
 - make consistent use of the school's system for providing pupils with feedback so that pupils know how to improve their work
 - insist that all work is well presented, particularly from boys and least-able pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Following the previous inspection, the standards of education across most areas of the school began to deteriorate. In May 2017, the school joined the Aston Community Education Trust. Through appropriate challenge and support from trust leaders, these standards have notably improved.
- Leaders' systems to monitor, review and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning are more rigorous than those used previously. With clear lines of accountability, more teachers meet the 'Shirebrook standard', outlining leaders' expectations of the quality of teachers' practice. Teachers' morale is high. However, the quality of teaching remains too variable to secure consistently good outcomes, including for current pupils.
- Subject leaders play a key role in improving the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. However, some of these subject leaders are not yet consistently effective in their roles.
- Leaders accurately identify pupils with SEND who require additional support. They provide teachers with detailed information about these pupils' needs. However, leaders do not evaluate effectively the impact that the additional support for these pupils has on their progress so that they can modify and improve their approaches.
- Leaders do not ensure that additional funding to help pupils in Year 7 who have fallen behind with their literacy or numeracy skills is used to good effect. Strategies to improve the literacy of these pupils are having some impact. However, leaders did not provide inspectors with any information as to the impact of their use of this funding to support these pupils to become secure in their mathematical skills.
- Staff at all levels value the quality of the training that they receive. Teachers also appreciate more opportunities to share their experiences and ideas with others. However, the training has not yet been effective in removing the inconsistent quality of teaching practice in some subject areas.
- With close support from the trust, school leaders' plans for improvement are focused precisely on securing sustained improvements. While many of their strategies have been introduced relatively recently, they are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and, as a result, pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders' previous overemphasis on pupils' attainment, rather than their progress, created a misleading picture about pupils' outcomes, particularly for those with SEND. Leaders now focus more precisely on assessing pupils' progress. This helps to ensure that they are more accurately informed when planning future improvements.
- Leaders have raised the profile of disadvantaged pupils. Staff are aware of the priority to improve these pupils' outcomes. Leaders have introduced a range of focused strategies to support them. While many of these strategies are still relatively new, the progress of these pupils is beginning to improve.
- Leaders monitor the attendance, behaviour and well-being of pupils closely. The recently formed 'student welfare team' works particularly with pupils who are more vulnerable. This team provides these pupils and their families with effective additional

support. Leaders' pastoral support for pupils is a strength of the school.

- Leaders have a clear rationale for the school's curriculum, founded on the needs of the pupils within the local context. They are committed to maintaining a broad curriculum offer. For example, the proportion of pupils studying a modern foreign language at GCSE is steadily increasing.
- Leaders also provide pupils with a rich 'co-curriculum' to develop pupils' enrichment and leadership opportunities. For example, while pupils can be elected onto the junior leadership team, others may choose to take up the 'Everest Challenge'.
- Leaders regularly promote pupils' personal, social, health and economic education. Similarly, they ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs are very well catered for, including through visits to places of worship in Year 7, debating gender equality in Year 8 and reflecting on the recent terrorist event in New Zealand in Year 10.
- A notable proportion of current teachers completed their teaching qualifications successfully through the school. Teachers new to the profession are well supported by senior and middle leaders as they develop their skills.
- Leaders promote a highly inclusive culture, with a key focus on encouraging equality and diversity. Pupils share facilities and learning experiences with their peers from the adjacent special school, making these pupils feel welcome and safe.
- Leaders ensure that the school is at the heart of the local community. They offer parents many opportunities to be involved with their children's learning. They also help parents to develop their own language skills, for example by delivering qualifications in English for speakers of other languages.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed to their roles. They know the local community context well and, as such, they are passionate about improving the life chances for the pupils. Governors understand and carry out their statutory responsibilities with regard to safeguarding effectively.
- Governors, including the chair of the governing body, have worked closely with the trust to better understand their responsibilities and to develop their skills. Ongoing training ensures that governors are able to provide senior leaders with informed challenge and support. For example, they hold senior leaders to account for their use of additional funding received for disadvantaged pupils and its impact on these pupils' outcomes.
- Since the school joined the trust, trust leaders have worked effectively with leaders at all levels to bring about improvements. Focused and ongoing support from the trust has ensured that senior leaders, including governors, have an accurate and realistic understanding of the quality of the teaching and learning and the work still required to continue to improve pupils' progress. Meanwhile, work by the trust with subject leaders has led to improvements in mathematics, English and science.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders follow safer recruitment practices thoroughly. Checks to ensure staff's suitability to work with children are secure.
- A team of trained leaders effectively supports the leader responsible for safeguarding. They use their knowledge and skills well to protect pupils and reduce the risks pupils may face, for example in relation to domestic violence. Leaders are aware of the risks of radicalisation and extremism and have made referrals about their concerns.
- Staff receive regular training and know how to recognise the signs that a pupil may be at risk. They have an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of safeguarding matters, including risks relevant to the local community, such as county lines. They are confident that leaders respond swiftly to any concerns that they may raise about a pupil.
- Leaders maintain comprehensive and timely records that outline their actions to keep pupils safe. When necessary, leaders liaise closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are met.
- A majority of parents who responded to the online Ofsted survey said their children were safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching that pupils receive is too variable within different subjects and across both key stages. As a result, pupils' learning is not consistently strong, and some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Not all teachers have high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, particularly the most able pupils.
- Teachers' use of pupils' prior learning to inform their future planning is inconsistent. As a result, while some pupils cannot access the learning, others lack the degree of challenge necessary to move their learning to the next stage.
- Questioning is not consistently effective in all areas. While some teachers neglect to clarify the reasoning behind pupils' answers, others fail to check pupils' learning to ensure that pupils secure the necessary long-term gains in knowledge. When questioning is more effective, pupils' misconceptions are challenged and they produce more detailed responses because of their teachers' persistence, for instance in science.
- The school's assessment and feedback policy is not applied consistently. The quality of teachers' feedback and pupils' responses varies, particularly for the younger pupils. When teachers' feedback is most effective, for example in English, pupils understand what they need to do to improve and this furthers their progress.
- Some pupils do not take enough pride in their work. This is particularly the case for boys and the least able pupils. This poor-quality work is not always challenged by teachers.
- Pupils with SEND appreciate the guidance they receive from additional adults. In some classrooms, these adults are deployed well and provide these pupils with close support, without making them overly dependent. However, the impact of these adults on the

progress of pupils with SEND is not yet consistently strong.

- In many lessons, pupils' levels of engagement in their learning are strong. However, in a minority of lessons, the off-task or passive behaviour of a small number of pupils goes unchallenged by teachers. This means that learning time is lost for some pupils.
- Most teachers possess strong subject knowledge. This allows them to use accurate subject vocabulary to promote pupils' understanding. Many teachers use their knowledge to plan effective sequences of learning.
- There are strong relationships between pupils and adults. Pupils cooperate effectively with peers and offer each other support when they find a task more difficult.
- The teaching of modern foreign languages is a strength. Teachers plan engaging activities which help pupils to acquire the necessary knowledge and develop their skills. Pupils use the target language readily to converse with others, even when it is not required.
- Teachers' work to promote pupils' independence and resilience is beginning to have a positive impact. Pupils engage readily in discussions and share their ideas willingly. They respect other's viewpoints, while offering alternative perspectives. For instance, inspectors observed Year 9 pupils debating pacifism versus a 'just war' with confidence.
- Homework is used effectively by some teachers, particularly in mathematics, to consolidate pupils' learning and help them to move on to the next stage.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. Most pupils readily demonstrate the school's 'Five Ps' of being present, punctual, prepared, polite and proud.
- Pupils say that, while bullying does take place in school, adults are quick to resolve any issues. A majority of pupils who responded to the online Ofsted survey said that there is an adult they can talk with if they have any concerns.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They know how to reduce the risks they may face when out in the local community or when using the internet.
- Leaders ensure that promoting pupils' positive mental health retains a high profile in the school. With staff trained as mental health first aiders, pupils understand how important it is to keep both their bodies and their minds fit and well.
- Pupils understand the importance of treating all people with respect, regardless of their faith, culture or opinion. They embrace difference, for instance working alongside pupils with SEND from the adjacent special school and celebrating the school's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pride event.
- Pupils receive impartial careers advice and guidance that raise their aspirations and prepare them well for their next steps. All Year 10 pupils engage in a valuable two-week work experience placement. This helps them to appreciate a range of different

opportunities they can progress to when they leave the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school site. Most behaviour incidents are low key and do not escalate. When necessary, pupils are appreciative of the support they receive to help them change and improve their behaviour.
- Attendance is above the national average and continues to improve. This includes the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent is below the national average. The work of the student welfare team is helping to reduce this proportion still further.
- Fewer pupils are excluded from school than previously. Leaders' extensive support for any pupil at risk of being excluded, for instance through counselling, is having a positive impact.
- Strategies to support vulnerable pupils are well developed and very successful. Pupils who attend the 'BASE support unit' for all or part of each day value the bespoke programmes designed to support their specific needs. For instance, the 'GROW' curriculum aims to improve pupils' independence and develop valuable life skills. These pupils recognise that the close support they receive helps them to improve their behaviour and succeed.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' outcomes have declined, including for disadvantaged pupils, most-able pupils and pupils with SEND. Pupils have not made enough progress in a range of subjects.
- More recently, leaders have taken effective action to improve pupils' progress. They have raised expectations and aspirations for pupils and staff. The quality of teaching and learning is also improving.
- Pupils with SEND have not achieved well over time due to a lack of targeted support. Current pupils with SEND are beginning to make better progress from their starting points. This is because they receive more timely support that is helping them to catch up. However, the progress of these pupils remains weak.
- The school's performance information and the work in pupils' books indicate that current pupils of all abilities are making better progress than that seen previously, including in English and mathematics. Nevertheless, leaders expect pupils' progress to remain below that seen for other pupils nationally.
- Current boys' progress, while improving, is still below that of girls.
- The difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is beginning to close. Disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress than disadvantaged pupils previously at the school.
- The progress of current pupils in English is better than previously, due to a marked

improvement in the quality of teaching and effective leadership from the new head of subject. Teachers' close support ensures that pupils know how to improve their work.

- Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has improved over time. An increased proportion of pupils achieved at least a grade 4 in their GCSE examinations in 2018. Current Year 11 pupils are on track to continue this improvement.
- Pupils achieve well in modern foreign languages because of effective teaching. An increased proportion of pupils are choosing to follow a course in French or Spanish at GCSE.
- In 2018, almost all Year 11 pupils secured sustained education or training placements when they left school. However, some of these pupils did not access courses at the level of which they were capable because they underachieved in their examinations.

School details

Unique reference number	136127
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10086761

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 sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	828
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Barton
Principal	Mark Cottingham
Telephone number	01623 742 722
Website	www.shirebrookacademy.org/
Email address	mcottingham@shirebrookacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	19–20 March 2013

Information about this school

- The school became an academy in September 2010. It moved into new buildings in 2013. The school is located on the same site as Stubbin Wood School, a community special school. The two schools share some of their facilities.
- The current principal took up the post in September 2015. All three vice-principals were already in post at that time. However, two assistant principals have since left the school.
- The school joined the Aston Community Education Trust in May 2017.
- A new school leader responsible for the provision for pupils with SEND was appointed in September 2016.
- There are nine subject leaders in school. Six of these subject leaders have been appointed since September 2016, including the heads of English, mathematics and science.

- Previously, pupils at key stage 4 completed their courses for each subject in one year. This was changed in September 2016. Therefore, key stage 4 pupils who took their exams in summer 2018 had followed two-year courses for each subject.
- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It has a growing number of pupils on its roll.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above average. Similarly, the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school provides some pupils in key stages 3 and 4 with on-site alternative provision through its BASE support unit.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 47 lessons across a wide range of subjects and in both key stages. Almost all of these lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed tutor time and one assembly.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books across a range of subjects and year groups, with a particular focus on mathematics, English and the work of pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders and teachers.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the trust, including the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer. She also met with representatives of the local governing body, including the chair.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour before school, during lessons and during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke formally with pupils from key stages 3 and 4, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Inspectors also spoke informally with other pupils.
- An inspector listened to pupils from Year 7 read.
- An inspector visited the school's BASE support unit, which provides some pupils in key stages 3 and 4 with an alternative curriculum.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents relating to the school's provision, including: self-evaluation and improvement planning; minutes of meetings of the local governing body; plans related to additional government funding; records relating to pupils' behaviour, exclusions and attendance; information about the attainment and progress of all pupils; safeguarding; information about the work of the trust; and information on the school's website.
- The lead inspector checked the school's single central register and the school's system for recruiting staff.
- Inspectors evaluated the 25 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. They also considered the 75 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and the 46 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nigel Boyd	Ofsted Inspector
Dick Vasey	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Moodie	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Walters	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Sheppard	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Hollingsworth	Her Majesty's Inspector

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

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