

Shrewsbury Academy

Corndon Crescent, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 2LL

Inspection dates

14–15 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Since the school opened in September 2016, pupils have made too little progress in almost all subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils make particularly slow progress and, as a result, underachieve. Leaders have not made improving their outcomes a sufficiently high priority.
- The strategic leadership of the education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is weak. These pupils do not make the progress that they should.
- Senior and middle leaders are not as effective as they could be and do not support the work of the new headteacher and trustees adequately.
- Most teaching is weak. This has a detrimental effect on pupils' progress.
- Most teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not sequence learning effectively or provide pupils with appropriate levels of challenge.
- The teaching of mathematics is ineffective and most pupils underachieve in the subject.
- The attendance rate of pupils, including those that are disadvantaged, is well below the national average.
- Despite recent improvements, the number of fixed-term exclusions remains high.
- There have been some recent improvements in behaviour around the site and during lessons. However, behaviour is still not good enough. Boisterous behaviour, in-school truancy and defiance towards staff were all seen during the inspection. Some parents, carers and pupils continue to be concerned about behaviour.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the appointment of the new interim chief executive officer (CEO) and the newly constituted trust board in June 2018, the trust is now providing effective support to the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils with social and emotional needs receive effective support.
- The new headteacher, who took up post in June 2018, has strengthened the leadership of the school.
- Careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) provide effective support for pupils.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - setting precise criteria to judge the success of the school's improvement plans, including the pupil premium strategy, so that leaders and governors can identify quickly whether actions are having the intended impact on pupils' progress
 - improving the quality of senior leadership and the leadership of all subject areas
 - implementing the redesigned curriculum that will enable all pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills and make the best possible progress.
- Rapidly improve teaching across the school so that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, make consistently good progress in all subjects by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve
 - insist that pupils complete work and take pride in its presentation
 - provide the right levels of challenge for all of their pupils
 - sequence learning in a way that enables pupils to make links between what they already know and new learning
 - use information about what pupils can and cannot do when planning lessons
 - use effective questioning to probe and develop pupils' understanding
 - have a greater awareness of strategies to overcome barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils in order to plan activities that help them to learn.
- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that activities in lessons develop pupils' understanding of mathematical topics.
- Rapidly improve pupils' attendance, including that of pupils who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, so that:
 - pupils' attendance is at or above the national average
 - pupils' persistent absence is reduced.
- Continue to build on the work that has been undertaken to improve behaviour by ensuring that:
 - all staff consistently apply the school's behaviour policy
 - pupils conduct themselves sensibly at break, at lunchtime and as they move around the school.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken

in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Shrewsbury Academy opened in September 2016 following the amalgamation of two local secondary schools. In the following two years, trustees, governors and senior leaders did not ensure that the school provided an acceptable standard of education. During this period, weak leadership meant that pupils did not learn effectively and made poor progress.
- In June 2018, following direct intervention by the Department for Education (DfE), a new group of trustees was appointed. They were joined by a new interim CEO of the trust and a new headteacher. Together, they have brought much-needed stronger leadership to the school.
- Despite significant changes to the school's leadership over the past year, leaders lack the capacity to ensure rapid improvement. The headteacher is reliant on external sources of support to assist him in his work.
- Leaders place insufficient focus on improving the performance of disadvantaged pupils. The reasons why disadvantaged pupils are underachieving are not analysed and, therefore, leaders are unable to provide targeted support. The pupil premium strategy is ineffective and leaders, including governors and trustees, do not monitor it well. Consequently, the progress of disadvantaged pupils remains weak.
- Since June 2018, there has been instability in staffing. Leaders have taken positive actions in an effort to improve the quality of teaching and to improve the school's financial position. In addition, leaders have had to deal with high absence rates of teachers. This has resulted in the school employing a large number of supply staff.
- Leaders are not doing enough to support pupils with SEND. They are not taking specific actions to provide the necessary personalised support that is required. Some parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that their children were not in receipt of the support stated on their individual education, health and care plans. Those responsible for SEND education confirmed this. Progress of pupils with SEND is weak.
- Leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning are not having the required effect. In January, leaders introduced a new strategy known as the 'Shrewsbury Academy 6'. This is not yet embedded as not all staff engage with it and some do not have the skills to teach it effectively. There are not enough strong practitioners in the school to model what good teaching looks like to others.
- Most of the parents who responded to Parent View are not happy about the quality of education that their children are receiving. Only a third of those who responded would recommend the school to others. Their main concerns are poor-quality teaching and poor behaviour.
- The curriculum does not enable pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in an effective way. This, coupled with poor teaching, is why pupils do not make good progress during their time in this school. A new curriculum has been developed ready for implementation in September 2019.

- The headteacher has started to tackle weaknesses in the school. Some staff have found this change challenging. This was reflected in some of the responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. Some staff say that frequent changes to the timetable and the behaviour policy are causing confusion.
- Leaders have made improving the behaviour of pupils a priority. They are providing personalised support to individual teachers to help them with classroom behaviour management. Some pupils and parents commented that behaviour is getting better, albeit slowly. However, the current culture in the school is one in which some pupils are disrespectful to staff.
- It is recommended that leaders should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- In the two years following the opening of Shrewsbury Academy, trustees did not ensure that the school benefited from strong governance. There was a lack of transparency between trustees and the local governing body, leaving governors unaware of much of what was happening. Following direct intervention from the DfE, a new board of trustees was constituted in June 2018. The new trustees appointed a new chair and a new interim CEO. A new scheme of delegation has now been established which makes specific roles and responsibilities for trustees and local governors much clearer. Under the leadership of the new chair and as a result of the wide and varied skills and experience of new trustees, governance is now much improved. Local governors are better informed and able to offer more effective challenge and support to the new headteacher. Due to the poor financial position inherited by the new board, trustees have had to contribute a significant amount of time to dealing with a significant deficit. Trustees have also been working with the DfE to appoint a new trust to take on the leadership of the school. At the time of the inspection, it was not known who the new sponsor will be.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. The safeguarding team provides effective training and development so that staff know how to spot signs of pupils being at risk.
- Most pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. Senior members of the pastoral team support pupils well with their social and emotional needs. The designated safeguarding lead is relatively new to this role but a very able and experienced team supports her. Members of this team work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the appropriate support.
- Staff keep detailed records of safeguarding concerns. The online tracking system used by the school is effective in ensuring that information can quickly be shared and actions monitored.
- Leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities for all pupils, especially those with poor attendance. Urgent personalised attention has been given to individual pupils

since June 2018. However, despite some improvements, a high proportion of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, are still persistently absent from school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate. As a result, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, are underachieving across all subjects.
- Most teachers do not have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve. Staff agree. Less than half of all staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire think that pupils are appropriately challenged at this school.
- Many teachers do not have high enough expectations of the quality and presentation of their pupils' work. They are too willing to accept work that is of a poor standard and untidily presented. Inspectors saw many books containing poorly presented or incomplete work. In some cases, pupils had no books.
- Much of the teaching seen was poorly planned and did not meet the needs of individual pupils. Most teachers do not plan learning that provides pupils with the right level of challenge. This prevents pupils from making good progress.
- Most teachers do not use questioning well enough to encourage pupils to think and explain their answers. Too often, questioning remains at a superficial level and is not used to probe and develop pupils' understanding. It is also not used well to tease out any misconceptions. As a result, pupils do not always learn from their mistakes and are not able to build on new learning.
- Since June 2018, a significant number of teachers have left the school. The school is now over-reliant on supply staff. The parents who responded to Parent View commented that staffing instability is affecting the quality of teaching.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning. There are occasions when teachers ignore pupils' poor behaviour and talk over disruptions. Pupils told inspectors that this is particularly common in lessons taught by supply teachers.
- The teaching of mathematics is weak and does not develop pupils' deep understanding of mathematical topics. Teachers move pupils on to harder topics before they have mastered more basic concepts. There is an over-reliance on pupils' use of self-assessment, which is superficial. Teachers do not routinely check whether pupils have fully understood what they are being taught.
- There is a small amount of good teaching in the school, most notably in science. Pupils respond positively to this and, in these lessons, they demonstrate better attitudes to learning.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Leaders are committed to developing an ethos where pupils feel well cared for. Most pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and comfortable.
- Most pupils say that bullying is not a problem in the school and that, when it does happen, it is usually dealt with effectively by staff. However, over half of the parents who responded Parent View disagree.
- The planned programme for personal, social, health and economic education covers a range of relevant topics related to pupils' personal development and well-being. Much of the school's work to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also taught through this programme. However, some of the teaching of the programme is poor. Some pupils do not remember specific content that has been covered.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site alternative provision for one day a week. This is providing additional opportunities to meet the learning needs of individual pupils. The effective communication between school staff and the providers ensures that these pupils are looked after and cared for. This offer is benefiting the personal development of these pupils.
- Leaders' work in CEIAG is a relative strength of the school. Pupils are well supported in learning about their future options. Increasingly, leaders are using community representatives as role models to help raise aspiration in terms of future career choices.
- Pupils benefit from a range of leadership opportunities. Leaders have created opportunities that make groups of pupils responsible for school events. For example, pupils in Year 7 are currently leading on a lower school project aimed at making the school site a clean environment. These pupils are gaining valuable organisational and interpersonal skills.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- The unacceptable behaviour of some pupils is having a detrimental effect on all areas of school life. Leaders have made improving behaviour a priority and feel that some progress has been made. Inspectors saw examples of positive behaviour at lunchtime and in classrooms. However, too frequently, behaviour in lessons and during unstructured and unsupervised time is poor. Many parents, pupils and staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaires said that poor behaviour continues to affect the quality of education in the school.
- Inspectors observed poor behaviour where, typically, pupils talked over the teacher or the teacher ignored the disruption. In some cases, pupils blatantly ignored the instructions of the teacher. Inspectors saw examples of in-school truancy, with pupils

failing to attend the right classroom at the right time and needing to be returned by school staff to the correct place, sometimes in large numbers. Teachers told inspectors that this is common.

- The number of fixed-term exclusions remains high. Month-by-month comparisons with the corresponding period last year show that fixed-term exclusions are reducing but the overall figure for the current academic year is expected to be higher than last year. This is due to a spike in exclusions at the start of this academic year as leaders reinforced their new expectations.
- Pupils' attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, remains well below the national average. The rate of persistent absence also remains above the national average. Current attendance data indicates that leaders' actions to address this have had some effect.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Since the school opened in 2016, outcomes for Year 11 pupils leaving the school have been consistently poor. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are particularly weak. In 2018, pupils at the end of Year 11 underachieved considerably across all subjects.
- Provision for pupils with SEND is weak. There is no clear overview of the teaching for pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable during their time in the school.
- Leaders' focus this year has been centred on pupils in Year 7 and Year 11. They acknowledge that a greater focus is needed on pupils in other year groups.
- Leaders expect the outcomes of the current cohort of Year 11 pupils to improve. Leaders have introduced a number of strategies to support Year 11 pupils' learning. Teachers say that some of these strategies have been effective, particularly the 'rapid response' strategy introduced in September. This strategy requires individual departments to agree specific actions regarding individual pupils so that they do not fall further behind. Senior leaders monitor this. However, the curriculum, the quality of teaching and the consistency of leadership are not yet strong enough to enable pupils to make good progress.
- The proportion of Year 11 pupils who progress to further education or training is in line with the national average. However, poor outcomes for pupils limit their post-16 study choices.

School details

Unique reference number	143401
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10088440

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	834
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Lowell Williams
Headteacher	Jon Arnold
Telephone number	01743 276 700
Website	shrewsburyacademy.sat.coop
Email address	enquiries@sa.sat.coop
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2016 following the amalgamation of two local secondary schools.
- Shrewsbury Academy is a member of the Shrewsbury Academies Trust (SAT).
- Following direct intervention from the DfE, a newly constituted board of trustees was appointed in June 2018.
- A new headteacher and an interim CEO also started at the school in June 2018.
- The school is currently undersubscribed. Pupil numbers vary from year group to year group.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium funding is above average.

- The school uses two alternative providers to meet the needs of a small number of pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons across the curriculum. During these visits, inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke to pupils about what they were learning.
- Year 11 lessons were not visited during this inspection as pupils were engaged with public examinations.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils from different year groups and with a range of different needs and abilities. Inspectors also spoke with many pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors met with the interim CEO of Shrewsbury Academies Trust (SAT), the vice-chair of the local governing body and the interim vice-chair of SAT. Telephone conversations were held with the chair of the local governing body and the interim chair of the trust board.
- Meetings were also held with members of the leadership team, middle leaders, teachers, pupils and other leaders who are currently providing external support.
- The views of parents were evaluated through the 98 responses to Parent View and the 59 responses to the Parent View free-text service. Inspectors also looked at the 81 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire and the 35 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- A number of school documents were scrutinised by inspectors, including the school leaders' self-evaluation of the school's performance, the school's development plan, minutes of governors' meetings, minutes of trust board meetings, safeguarding folders, attendance records and pupils' progress data.

Inspection team

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Steve Byatt	Ofsted 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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