

# Sheffield Springs Academy

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131896
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	342865
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sara Morrissey HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1003
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	44
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Christine Goldsack
<b>Principal</b>	Mrs Jane Miles
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 May 2009
<b>Academy address</b>	Hurlfield Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S12 2SF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Thirty-one lessons were observed and 30 teachers seen. Meetings were held with groups of staff, including senior and middle leaders and teachers new to the academy, students, governors and the regional executive director for the academy's sponsor. Inspectors observed the academy's work, and looked at information about students' progress and attainment, data relating to attendance and behaviour, documentation relating to sixth form provision and outcomes, and records of lesson observations by staff. They also reviewed feedback from 85 responses to questionnaires completed by parents and carers and responses to questionnaires completed by students and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- It looked at the effectiveness of strategies used to accelerate students' learning and progress, particularly at Key Stage 3.
- It considered how well teaching takes into account the needs of different groups of students, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- It investigated the extent to which basic skills including literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) have been integrated across the curriculum to accelerate learning.
- It looked at the effectiveness of strategies to improve attendance, particularly through links made with parents and carers.
- It considered the effectiveness with which leaders and managers at all levels evaluate the impact of actions taken to drive improvement.

## Information about the school

Sheffield Springs Academy is broadly average in size and is sponsored by United Learning Trust (ULT). It shares collaborative provision for sixth form students with its sister academy in Sheffield. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is over twice the national average. Most students are of White British origin although an increasing number of students have joined the academy from different minority ethnic groups since it opened in 2006. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average but the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs is lower than that seen nationally.

The academy has subject specialisms in performing arts and in business and enterprise. At the time of the last inspection the academy was judged to require significant improvement and given a notice to improve. In January 2010 a new Principal and Senior Vice-Principal were appointed to the academy. Seventeen new teachers joined the academy in September 2010.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

### Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Attainment is rising from a low baseline and gaps are closing securely in students' learning and progress at both Key Stages 3 and 4. In summer 2010 the proportion of students in Year 11 who gained five or more good GCSE passes including English and mathematics exceeded the government's minimum target set for all secondary schools for the first time and confirms a three-year trend of improvement in attainment.

Intensive and sharply focused teaching strategies to accelerate progress, that are informed by detailed and accurate assessment information, ensure that achievement is satisfactory and rising.

A clear vision has been communicated by senior leaders to create a learning community that focuses sharply on ensuring that all students achieve their best both personally and academically during their time at the academy. The quality of teaching has improved and is satisfactory. Greater emphasis is placed on engaging students actively in their learning, for example through the use of modern technologies, and in the best lessons teachers' enthusiasm for their subject captures and sustains students' interest. However, activities are not always tailored to meet the full range of needs and assessment strategies are not used consistently to assist learning and ensure that all students make the progress they might. Opportunities are also missed to develop students' skills in taking responsibility for their learning or to reflect on what they have learnt and what they need to do to improve the quality of their own learning and progress.

Academy leaders have combined the need for short-term interventions to raise achievement rapidly with a well considered long-term strategy to drive improvement. For example, the curriculum has been adapted to enable students to follow a broad range of courses to suit their interests and capabilities and gain important skills for their future economic well-being. Although it is too soon to see the full impact of this strategy, plans are based firmly on an accurate evaluation of students' needs. Shared provision for students in the sixth form ensures that they make satisfactory progress by the time they leave the academy. However, leadership of the sixth form is not sufficiently strategic to maximise outcomes for this group of students.

Pastoral care and support is a growing strength of the academy and underpinned by a detailed knowledge and understanding of the needs of individual students. Students report that they feel safe and are confident that any concerns will be dealt with by staff. Their behaviour is satisfactory and generally reflects the quality of teaching. Staff have strengthened links with parents and carers to raise attendance of different groups of

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students and, in particular, those who have been persistently absent in the past. Academy leaders have an accurate view of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. Governance has improved and is better placed to hold the academy to account for students' performance. The Principal and Senior Vice-Principal have been supported well by the Regional Executive Director for ULT and used resources made available by the academy's sponsor to tackle areas for improvement effectively. The positive impact of actions taken since the last inspection reflects satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Accelerate the pace of learning to raise attainment further by:
  - increasing the proportion of teaching that is good and outstanding
  - tailoring activities to meet the full range of students' learning needs
  - making better use of assessment strategies to support learning.
- Develop students' skills so that they are confident to:
  - take greater responsibility for their learning
  - reflect on their learning and evaluate the next steps that they need to take to improve their work and progress.
- Strengthen the strategic leadership of the sixth form to:
  - provide a clear overview of provision and students' outcomes that effectively informs improvement planning
  - maximise the impact of sixth form provision on students' academic outcomes and personal development.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Students' achievement is satisfactory. Progress has accelerated since the time of the last inspection in all year groups and attainment is rising from well below average levels on entry to the academy. The academy has established secure systems to tackle underachievement rigorously. Strategies used by staff as part of the National Challenge initiative have proved effective. Results from examinations taken by Year 11 students in summer 2010 indicate that the overall trend of improvement has been sustained. Assessment information also indicates that students are making more rapid progress in Years 7, 8 and 9 compared with the previous year. Although it remains well below average, attainment is rising in English, mathematics and science as a consequence of well-targeted strategies to counter past underachievement.

Regular analysis of information gathered to measure progress made by different groups of students enables underachievement to be identified and tackled swiftly. For example,

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the gap in performance between boys and girls is closing. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers because staff receive regular information that informs their planning appropriately. Within this positive picture of improvement, academy leaders are acutely aware that inconsistencies remain in the attainment and progress of different groups of students and between subjects. This is because teaching does not always take into account the full range of students' needs and the poor attendance of a small minority of students in the past has hindered their learning.

High expectations are communicated regularly by staff throughout the academy and make a significant contribution to students' satisfactory spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The curriculum and subject specialisms provide suitable opportunities for students to grow in self-confidence and contribute to the academy community, for example as Year 11 ambassadors. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are satisfactory. Incidents of bullying are rare and students generally feel safe and well supported. However, there are occasions when behaviour deteriorates, usually because teaching does not engage students or agreed procedures for managing behaviour are not followed consistently. Students understand the importance of regular attendance and, while overall attendance remains below the national average, targeted groups of students have responded positively to support and come to school more regularly. Students learn about the world of work through links established with local industry as part of the business and enterprise specialism.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection as a result of the systematic monitoring and evaluation of practice. Inadequate teaching has been tackled robustly and best practice is shared routinely. A 'toolbox' of collected ideas that have been shared and demonstrated is a useful additional resource for teachers. A standardised planning format and detailed assessment information has increased the consistency with which teachers prepare for students' experiences in lessons. Records of observations indicate that more teachers involve students early in the lesson, adding to their learning and enjoyment. A good range of technologies are used effectively in most lessons to support learning. New strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning further are included in the academy's improvement plan.

During the inspection, teaching outlined clearly for students what they can expect in the new academic year and set out the ways in which routines will be used to support learning effectively. Teachers have used assessment information to organise seating within the classroom to maximise interaction and support. In the best lessons high expectations were clearly communicated and helpful guidance enabled students to understand what they will be learning. Tasks were planned to engage their interest quickly and encourage their contributions. Ongoing feedback through effective questioning, group work and peer support combined to facilitate progress. Where lessons were less effective, activities were not tailored sufficiently to provide challenge or support for all students. Opportunities were missed to use assessment strategies to check progress and adapt activities to enable learning to proceed briskly. Consequently, the pace of the lesson slowed, at times students' interest waned and they become distracted.

The curriculum is matched well to the needs of students. A broad range of GCSE and BTEC courses has contributed to improvements in outcomes for Key Stage 4 students, including some who are at risk of disaffection. Useful steps have been taken to improve basic learning skills across the curriculum. However, this remains a focus for academy leaders and plans are well advanced to adopt a more strategic approach to improving literacy. A broad range of extra-curricular opportunities are available and uptake by students is good. Transition arrangements from Key Stage 2 enable Year 7 students to settle quickly into the academy. Clear pathways of progression have also been established from Key Stage 4.

The quality of care and support is satisfactory and improving rapidly. A relatively new team of staff is developing effective strategies to raise attendance from low levels and support students with behavioural, emotional and social needs. Staff have a very good

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understanding of the context of the community in which the academy is located. Students with complex needs are supported well as a result of effective links with external agencies, including the local authority, to overcome barriers to learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The Principal and Senior Vice-Principal have worked together as a team with great determination and energy to embed their vision for the academy's future. They have a clear ambition to raise aspirations and enable all students, whatever their individual needs, interests or starting points, to achieve their best within a supportive learning community. Leadership at all levels has been restructured to reflect the aims of the academy identified in the action plan. Roles and responsibilities have been clarified and clearly communicated to all staff. Although many systems and structures to drive improvement are relatively new, staff teams understand how they can contribute to the school's improvement. Staff's induction has also contributed to a positive professional engagement between new and existing teachers around how to improve their practice. Staff report that they feel more confident in their use of agreed routines for teaching and behaviour management.

A cohesive community has been established within the academy. Leaders are working actively to increase the reputation of the academy as a welcoming centre of learning within the wider community. Links forged with parents and carers have helped to promote better attendance and behaviour among targeted groups of students. Through the 'Friends of Sheffield Springs Association', parents and carers are encouraged to get involved with academy events. Partnerships with other agencies and with the local authority have been extended to promote students' well-being further. Safeguarding procedures are detailed and integrated well into all aspects of the academy's work. Risk assessment is well developed and training is provided for all staff and for older students who work with younger members of the academy.

In accordance with the ULT governance structure, a local governing body has been created since the last inspection to take on specific responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the academy. Its members have quickly established effective ways of working with senior and middle leaders, for example through links with different curriculum areas to deepen their understanding of how the academy operates.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

Students make satisfactory progress relative to their starting points in the sixth form. A suitable range of courses across the collaborative sixth form meet their needs and help students to grow in confidence as learners. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and staff provide helpful support for students to aid their learning. Those students interviewed shared a clear sense of responsibility about the contribution that they can make to the academy community. Students are encouraged to raise their aspirations and pursue courses in higher education. In 2010 a significant number who applied to university secured places. The number of students who were not in education, employment or training when they left the academy was broadly in line with the national average. While leadership of the sixth form is satisfactory, a strategic overview has not been established to inform planning to maximise the impact of provision on students' academic outcomes and personal development.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

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## **Views of parents and carers**

A small proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Most were positive about their children's experience and a small number of comments made reference to improvements that they have noticed over the last year in relation to the support their children receive and communication with the academy. A small number of parents and carers expressed concern about students' behaviour. Inspectors found that behaviour is generally satisfactory and that the academy's systems for managing poor behaviour have been strengthened. A few concerns were expressed by parents and carers about aspects of teaching. Inspectors found that the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sheffield Springs Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 85 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1003 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	25	59	68	4	5	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	24	28	58	67	3	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	32	49	56	8	9	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	22	50	57	14	16	4	5
The teaching is good at this school	14	16	54	62	13	15	4	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	11	60	69	16	18	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	9	64	74	12	14	2	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	20	53	61	8	9	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	16	56	64	9	10	5	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	21	48	55	13	15	6	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	7	64	74	11	13	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	18	21	48	55	14	16	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	23	52	60	12	14	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



15 September 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Sheffield Springs Academy, Sheffield, S12 2SF

Thank you for welcoming us during the recent inspection of your school. We appreciated the time we were able to spend talking to many of you about your work and what it is like to be a student at Sheffield Springs Academy. Following the last inspection in May 2009, when the academy was given a notice to improve, leaders were asked to make a number of important improvements. I am delighted to tell you that, as a result of the changes that have been made, the academy now provides you with a satisfactory education and is continuing to improve.

Senior leaders have reorganised staff teams so that they can work together well to improve your experience at the academy. You are making better progress in your work and your attainment is rising. This is because teaching has improved and staff are able to identify where you have gaps in your learning more easily so that they can help you make more rapid progress. Some of you told us that the new behaviour code is easier to follow and helping to improve behaviour in lessons so that learning can continue uninterrupted.

To help the academy improve further, we have asked the principal and staff to:

- raise your attainment further by ensuring that all lessons include activities that are suited to your different needs and enable you to make good progress in your learning
- provide more opportunities for you to take greater responsibility for your learning and give you time to think about what you have learnt and how you can improve your work
- make sure that the sixth form is organised in such a way that all students achieve as well as they can and are confident learners by the time they leave the academy.

You have an important part to play by attending school regularly, maintaining high standards of behaviour and working to the very best of your ability every lesson so that you can achieve well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Sara Morrissey

Her Majesty's Inspector

On behalf of the inspection team

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