

Heanor Gate Science College

Kirkley Drive, Heanor, DE75 7RA

Inspection dates

4–5 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Some students in Key Stage 3, especially the more able, do not make the progress that they should.
- Boys do not make as much progress as girls in both the main school and sixth form.
- While the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students and others is narrowing in English, this gap is not improving fast enough in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is too variable; teachers do not always use assessments appropriately enough to plan lessons which challenge the most able.
- Teachers in the main school do not consistently ensure that marking and feedback are helpful enough for students to improve their work.
- Teacher assessments in English are not reliable enough. As a result, leaders miss opportunities to provide essential support to the right students to help them make or exceed expected progress.
- Governors do not always ensure that all their statutory duties are carried out effectively.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers, in a relatively short time, have rapidly improved the progress made by many students. Attainment across a range of subjects has significantly improved and compares favourably to national averages.
- The quality of teaching and achievement in science is consistently strong.
- As a result of strong leadership of teaching, the quality of teaching at Key Stage 4 and 5 is mostly good or better.
- Achievement, teaching and leadership in the sixth form is consistently strong and improving rapidly.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that the quality of careers advice and guidance from Years 8-13 is of a high standard; as a result, the school has no students who do not progress to the next stage in their education or succeed in getting a job. Retention and success rates in the sixth form are good.
- The behaviour of students, including their attitudes to learning, is consistently good across the academy. The academy works effectively to ensure that students are safe.
- The support for disabled students and those with special educational needs is enabling them to make good progress across the academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 21 lessons; most were jointly observed with members of the leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the head of sixth form, the co-ordinator for special educational needs, subject leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body. The lead inspector also spoke with the sponsor’s representative and the academy’s improvement partner.
- Inspectors interviewed five groups of students formally in the main school and sixth form and informally spoke with them in lessons and around the school. A proportion of these students were specifically selected from the highest ability group; others represented middle and low ability groups and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of students in unstructured times and evaluated the safety of the site.
- Students’ workbooks and coursework assignments both in the main school and sixth form, representing a range of abilities, were scrutinised across most subjects. This activity was carried out with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors took into account the 62 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and the academy’s own parent survey.
- Inspectors took account of 39 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed a variety of documents, including: the academy’s self-evaluation summary, the academy improvement plan, statutory school policies, governing body minutes, and records on attendance and behaviour. They looked at the academy’s analysis of the 2014 examination results and the current assessments for those students currently in Years 10, 11 and post 16.

Inspection team

Zarina Connolly, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Deirdre Duignan	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Colin Lower	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The academy is a larger-than-average secondary school with a sixth form. It has a specialism in science.
- The academy is sponsored by the Spencer Academies Trust.
- Most of the students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students for whom the academy receives the pupil premium is close to the national average at 26%. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who, in this school, are known to be eligible for free school meals and for looked after children.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- Alternative off-site provision is arranged for a very small number of students at Key Stage 3 and 4 accessing the Island Project via the 'integrated pathways' programme led by the local authority and Derby Pride College.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further, especially at Key Stage 3, so that all students, specifically the most able and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, make better progress by:
 - ensuring that marking and feedback provides students with information and advice to help them to improve their knowledge and understanding in relation to assessment criteria
 - making sure that teachers appropriately challenge students to develop their understanding through the questions they ask and the activities they set.
- Strengthen leadership and management further by:
 - developing more effective strategies to accelerate the progress boys make across the academy by learning from subject areas where boys achieve consistently well
 - ensuring that pupil premium funding is used effectively to accelerate the progress that students make, especially in mathematics
 - building on the support given to the English department from the sponsors so that teachers can make independent and more accurate predictions about examination outcomes of students
 - ensuring that governors improve their monitoring activities in order to check the progress the school is making and check that statutory policies are updated in line with government guidance.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have brought about many changes to improve the life chances of students since the last inspection. They have acted quickly to address the serious concerns raised by the last section 5 inspection; for example, students now experience much better quality of teaching at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Students' achievement has improved across a range of subjects. However, leaders recognise that there is still much to do to secure good and outstanding outcomes for their students.
- The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is not consistently good which has led to poor progress by some students. Leaders are putting important measures into place to address this such as change in staffing and students' class groupings. Early signs indicate that that this is having an impact.
- Leaders have ensured that the quality of information about students' progress and attainment has improved greatly since the last inspection. However, precise and helpful target-setting is not fully embedded across the academy. Consequently, some departments and some students are confused about which targets they are meant to reach.
- The academy's strategy for improving the outcomes for disadvantaged students is having some success, especially in English, science and in terms of the proportion of these students that achieve five or more good GCSE's, including English and mathematics. However, students' progress is not improving as much in mathematics. This is because academy leaders are not always targeting pupil premium funding support precisely enough.
- The development of students' literacy skills is improving across the curriculum. Teachers make reference to literacy aspects of their subjects regularly and this is impacting positively on students' reading and writing skills. However, leaders do not have a coherent plan to improve numeracy across the academy.
- The range of subjects on offer is good. There is a sensible balance between academic and vocational learning, with on-site provision in the purpose-built beauty salon and construction site. Students in Key Stages 4 and the sixth form are guided to the most appropriate blend of options, but leaders make concerted efforts to ensure that individual needs and interests are met. Students who find learning in mainstream lessons difficult are offered highly personalised timetables to re-engage them with learning and to ensure they receive the support they need to do well.
- Leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum to ensure that it meets the new national guidelines and allows all students to develop their full potential. This includes the introduction of a 'challenge curriculum' at Key Stage 3 to ensure there is a greater degree of challenge to more able students in particular. Leaders have also made changes to the science curriculum, because it was not fully appropriate for all learners. The academy does not enter students early for any examinations.
- Since the last inspection, leaders' strategies to improve outcomes for boys at all key stages have had mixed success. For example, boys' writing and mathematical skills lag behind girls at Key Stage 3 and their achievement at vocational subjects in the sixth form is not still good enough. The science department has demonstrated consistent success in engaging boys and ensuring good progress. In the sixth form boys have improved their academic achievement as a result of careful mentoring and support programmes.
- Subject leadership is strong, especially of English, mathematics and science. They carry out their monitoring duties rigorously and use the whole school 'toolkit' (guidance on how to evaluate the quality of teaching and achievement) well to measure the quality of their respective departments. The relatively new subject leader of English has benefited from regular mentoring from an outstanding head of department from the sponsor school.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. There is a well-developed programme of training that is adapted to the needs of individual staff. A coaching model, to develop good practice, is having measurable impact, especially in English and science.

- Leaders of behaviour and safety have developed coherent systems and support structures which have directly led to significant improvements in students' behaviour and attitudes.
- The special educational needs coordinator has provided good leadership to ensure that those students with additional needs are supported well and make good progress. Effective personalised intervention programmes are built into the curriculum. The teaching assistants who lead these sessions provide valuable input to help students improve their skills and develop their confidence.
- Leaders and managers have a strong grasp of how government pupil premium funding is spent. They measure the impact of their spending rigorously and make changes to the type of support provided when clear impact and value for money is not seen.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is used to support students' literacy and numeracy skills at Key Stage 3. This is proving to be effective in improving the levels of progress that these students make in reading and writing in years 7 and 8 but has not improved rates of progress in mathematics as much.
- The academy's provision of careers, advice and guidance across the academy is strong. Students are well-prepared for the next stage of their education and good links are made with local agencies, employers, and further and higher education providers to make sure that students are equipped with enough information to make informed choices about their future. There are currently no students who have moved on from the academy who are not in employment or education (NEET).
- The personal, social, and health education (PSHE) programme and the recent whole school approach to developing students' understanding of their citizenship responsibilities and British values, is becoming more embedded. Students spoke confidently about what they understood by these ideas and they showed a good level of understanding of beliefs and cultures other than their own. They also expressed their enjoyment of PSHE lessons especially because these are now taught by specialist teachers. There is a comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities and enrichment opportunities. These are open to all students and include opportunities for involvement in local charity projects, as well as international travel.
- Leaders are rigorous in monitoring the progress, attendance and behaviour of those attending alternative provision.
- The headteacher has successfully implemented a robust system for performance management. Based on a clear and transparent set of career progression expectations and targets, all teachers know why they have or have not achieved a pay progression. Support staff are also included in the performance management process. As a result of adhering to rigorous performance measures of success, not all teachers achieved their pay progression last year.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Leaders have effective systems for pinpointing those at risk and ensuring that appropriate actions are taken to keep them safe.
- The headteacher and leaders and managers at all levels have demonstrated a capacity to bring about essential improvements in difficult circumstances. Their vision and professionalism have galvanised support from all stakeholders; parents who responded to the online survey and academy questionnaires strongly support the leadership of the academy; staff are overwhelmingly positive about the aims and direction of the academy.
- The representative from the Spencer Academies Trust provides strong support to the academy. Experienced senior and subject leaders from the trust have already provided the academy with valuable advice and guidance. The sponsor's teaching school alliance already has effected important improvements to leadership and teaching in the English department.

■ The governance of the school:

- The academy has recently appointed a new Chair of the Governing Body. He is well-established in the community and brings with him valuable skills and knowledge; he has made an effective start. He is well supported by a commissioned school improvement partner and has already attended the well-established trust's governor network meetings. He demonstrates a good understanding of the key issues facing the academy and that are preventing it from becoming a 'good' school.
- Governors ask challenging questions of leaders, holding them to account and ensuring that they use valuable resources efficiently. They monitor the effectiveness of pupil premium spending well and ensure that financial accounting is managed well.
- Governors still receive some support from external consultants and sponsors to ensure that their duties are carried out effectively. For example, some statutory policies and oversight of certain areas of the school are not always checked as thoroughly as they should. The school improvement partner has worked closely with the new chair to develop an effective monitoring plan, which enables governors to gain first-hand information about how well the school is doing.
- Governors understand their role in ensuring that the academy promotes British values and prevents extremist ideology. They have fully endorsed a revised curriculum to reinforce these ideas.
- Since the last inspection, governors have greatly improved the way in which they manage the performance of the headteacher. Clear targets, rooted in students' performance, which are checked periodically through the year, mean that the headteacher is held fully to account for the progress of the school.
- Governors have now ensured that all arrangements to safeguard students meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- All inspectors noted, and other monitoring visit reports show, that students' attitudes to learning are generally excellent. There are very few instances of off-task behaviour, even when the quality of teaching was not as good as it should be. Students settle to work quickly although some do not always keep their books well or present their work with pride.
- Students' conduct and their appearance around the school are exemplary. They are polite and courteous to each other, to visitors and other adults.
- The academy has employed the use of a 'seclusion' room which has proved very successful as there have been few incidents of reoffending by students after this sanction has been applied.
- Younger and older students spoke well and with confidence about their learning. Those spoken to by inspectors, demonstrated a well-developed understanding of the world and community in which they live and their responsibility to towards them. They understand about British values and democracy and recognise the need to be vigilant about combating extremist ideas.
- Most students at all key stages felt they had been well prepared for the next stage in their learning, although a few more able older students showed a lack of ambition to attend university one day.
- There are very few incidents of poor behaviour, homophobic or racist bullying. Students say that behaviour has improved considerably compared to last year and teachers use the behaviour systems consistently well. One Year 11 student suggested that the reason for this improvement was because the code of conduct emphasised how students should behave, rather than how they shouldn't behave.

- Consequently, students have risen to the high expectations by teachers. They also confirm that bullying is rare and that there is no racist or homophobic bullying at the academy.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- The curriculum to ensure that students keep safe, especially online, is successful. Students speak confidently about how they have been taught about internet safety, including using social networking responsibly. One girl said, 'it is instilled in us from Year 7 that bullying online will not be tolerated' and commented further that this is the reason there is no online bullying at the academy.
- Students feel safe in the school and feel well-supported by members of staff. They feel that incidents will be dealt with quickly by teachers should any arise. They feel safe to speak to members of staff if they experienced any problems.
- Rigorous systems are in place to ensure that the progress of those taught off-site is monitored and their attendance is checked.
- All members of staff have undertaken appropriate child protection training.
- Leaders, including governors ensure that arrangements for safeguarding students are secure and meet statutory duties.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although much improved, the quality of teaching requires further improvement because not enough students, including the most able, make good progress over time. While leaders have taken effective action to eradicate inadequate teaching, there is still some inconsistency in the quality of teaching in different subjects and across different year groups.
- Teaching in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form is typically good, because teachers ensure that lessons are well planned, use their expertise effectively, and keep a sharp eye on how well students are learning. This is not always the case in Key Stage 3, where teachers sometimes set work that is too easy and too often settle for responses from students that are less than good. As a result, some students in lower years do not make sufficient progress.
- Teachers' marking frequently provides helpful comments to students on how to improve individual pieces of work. However, not all teachers know what students need to do to improve their work, or set helpful targets for students. This slows the progress that some students make.
- Teachers' assessment of students' work is not always accurate enough and does not make clear what students are able to do or what they need further practice in. Progress towards targets is not monitored carefully enough to give students clear feedback on how to reach the next level or grade.
- Teaching does not always challenge more-able students; as a result, some do not make the progress of which they are capable. This is because teachers do not use questioning well enough to ensure that students produce sophisticated responses that they can fully explain and justify, or give clear information on how to access higher marks.
- Teachers monitor the progress of different groups of students carefully, and increasingly use a range of strategies to ensure that all students are learning well. For example, in English lessons, teachers think carefully about how to group students, and assign 'progress partners' to ensure that more able students are stretched and challenged, and that lower ability and disadvantaged students do not fall behind.

- As part of the school's strategy to improve literacy, teachers routinely correct students' grammar and spelling mistakes and provide opportunities for students to produce extended pieces of writing. For example, students are expected to produce comprehensive scientific explanations in science lessons. As a result, students' reading and writing skills are developing well. There are fewer opportunities for students to develop their mathematical skills across other subjects, and their numeracy skills are not as well developed as they could be.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to less-able students both in class, and in small group teaching sessions. This is helping to ensure that these students make better progress.
- A very small number of students are in alternative provision. This is organised with accredited organisations, where the quality of teaching, and students' progress, are carefully monitored. These students achieve well on their chosen courses.
- Where teaching is most effective, students respond well to teachers' high expectations of their learning and conduct. Teachers ensure no time is wasted, lessons have a clear purpose and there is a good level of challenge. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson, students were tasked with working together to work out the meaning of 'My Last Duchess', and by the end of the lesson could offer convincing comparisons to 'The River God'. In a Year 12 chemistry lesson, a culture of high aspirations, coupled with passionate and inspirational teaching, ensured that students made exceptional progress.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The progress made by students in the 2014 examinations from their different starting points in both English and mathematics has improved compared to last year, but remains below national averages. This is despite the attainment on entry of those students being greater than the national average. The proportion of students making more than expected progress is lower than found nationally.
- Progress in Key Stage 3 is improving but not enough students at Key Stage 3 make expected progress in both English and mathematics given their starting points.
- The gap between boys' and girls' achievement across all key stages remains too wide. Progress in writing at Key Stage 3 for boys still lags behind girls and younger boys are not making as much progress as girls in mathematics. At Key Stage 4 the gap between boys and girls in mathematics and science is narrow, although it remains significant in English.
- The achievement gap between those eligible for pupil premium funding and other students is narrowing in English, but not in mathematics. The gap is equivalent to half a grade behind their peers in English and one grade in mathematics. Over time the national gap is narrowing rapidly in English. A much greater proportion of students eligible for pupil premium funding are now achieving five GCSE's including English and mathematics compared to last year.
- The most able students are making better progress in Key Stage 4 than 3. In Key Stage 4 the current progress students are making is set to exceed to national averages for both English and mathematics; their progress was close to national expectations in the 2014 examinations. Progress and attainment for the most able students in Years 7, 8 and 9 is not as good as it should be, given their attainment on entry.
- Students' attainment in both mathematics and English now exceeds national averages and the proportion of those students achieving five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, is improving but not yet good considering the attainment profile of students when they enter the academy.
- Attainment and progress in science is good across all key stages. This is because of the growing strength in the quality of teaching and leadership.
- Students with special educational needs, and those with disabilities, are making better progress as result of the focused support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. Their reading and

writing skills are improving as a result of carefully planned and monitored intervention strategies. Effective liaison between teachers and teaching assistants ensures they are making much-improved progress in science.

- Those students eligible for catch-up funding support are making good and sometimes better progress than their peers in writing and reading. They have not made as much progress in mathematics.
- The small number of students accessing courses off-site are making progress and engaging in their studies well.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Leaders and managers provide a well-managed individual study programme for students; they ensure that students are mentored appropriately by their form tutors.
- Sixth form provision is characterised by excellent teacher-student relationships, which is fostering mutual respect and high expectations. Students interviewed by inspectors all spoke highly of their tutors and the senior leaders in charge of their year. They feel well-supported and challenged to achieve their best.
- Students are provided with useful careers advice and guidance to help them make informed choices about the next stage of their education. Over 70% of students go on to universities and all attend the universities of their first or second choice. There is a good proportion of the most-able who attend the Russell Group universities. Parents are fully informed about progression choices. There is a parents evening held called 'life after the sixth form', which is well attended.
- Progress and attainment in AS and A level courses is good and the proportion of students achieving A* or A at A level last year was above the national average. In Year 13 the attainment of students rose by 4% compared to last year. Students achieve well above national minimum standards in their advanced level subjects.
- The achievement in vocational courses remains high, although boys did less well than girls. Boys and girls achieved equally well in A level courses.
- The statutory duties to provide a good quality study programme for students is adhered to rigorously. Students who did not achieve English or mathematics GCSE at Key Stage 4 were mostly successful.
- Retention and success rates have improved considerably compared to last year, due to the improved guidance given to students about course choices.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is consistently good. There are effective systems to monitor the quality of teaching. There is now hardly any differences in the progress made by different groups of students in lessons; a contributory factor for this success is that there are now personalised study skills sessions held for boys and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The attendance and punctuality of students is monitored rigorously; register logs show that students attend well and arrive mostly on time to the academy and lessons.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137606
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	447408

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
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1385
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Gascoyne
Headteacher	Robert Howard
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2013
Telephone number	01773 716396
Fax number	01773 765814
Email address	mail@heanorgate.derbyshire.sch.uk

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