

# Sheffield Park Academy

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131895
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	362701
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Cathryn Kirby HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	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>	1094
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	157
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alan Milward
<b>Principal</b>	Mrs Maria Nightingale
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2009
<b>School address</b>	Beaumont Close Sheffield South Yorkshire S2 1RY
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<b>Age group</b>	11–19
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 36 lessons taught by 36 teachers. Meetings were held with the Principal and deputy Principal, other academy leaders, groups of students, teachers, the Chair and other members of the Governing Body, and a representative of the academy's sponsor. Inspectors observed the academy's work, and looked at development plans, minutes of meetings, records of monitoring and evaluation, records of students' progress, academy policies and documents relating to safeguarding.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Examination results for students at the end of Key Stages 4 and 5 and the academy's current progress tracking information for all groups.
- The quality of teaching and its impact on students' progress in learning.
- The impact of provision on students' behaviour and attendance.
- The capacity of leaders, managers, and members of the governing body to sustain and build upon improvement during the period of special measures.

## Information about the school

Sheffield Park Academy is a larger than average 11–18 secondary school serving a diverse community in south-east Sheffield. The academy is sponsored by the United Learning Trust. Over a third of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, of predominantly Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. A similar number speak English as an additional language. The known eligibility for free school meals is well above average as is the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The Principal took over the substantive role in February 2011, although she joined the academy in summer 2010 as a consultant working with the senior leadership team on behalf of the sponsors. Provision for a small number of students in the sixth form is shared through a reciprocal arrangement with the sister academy, Sheffield Springs. The academy has specialist status in Business and Enterprise and holds a Healthy School Award.

In July 2009, the academy was placed in special measures because it was failing to provide an acceptable standard of education.

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

Sheffield Park academy provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education. The calm and welcoming atmosphere reflects a very different picture to that presented to inspectors at the first monitoring visit in December 2009. All members of the academy's community have worked successfully to make it a better place.

Since the last inspection actions set in place have addressed weaknesses. Behaviour and teaching quality have improved considerably. Attainment is rising from a low base and the achievement of all groups of students, including those in the sixth form, is satisfactory.

The sponsor's close links with the academy have ensured continuity at times of considerable change and challenge. Their actions have been key to providing training that has equipped leaders and managers with the necessary skills to tackle weaknesses. Governance arrangements too, have had a significant impact, for example, ensuring that the right appointments have been made. The Principal's strong leadership has given greater momentum to the pace of change. Staff are looking to the future with new-found confidence. The academy demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Teaching is satisfactory and the proportion of lessons in which students make good progress is improving quickly. Academy leaders know where highly effective practice exists, but as a strategy to further strengthen teaching quality, could do more to share this systematically. The curriculum offers study options that meet students' diverse needs and interests. The extended schools programme enriches their experiences. Students appreciate the personal advice and guidance that helps them make the right choices at important transition points. Academy leaders recognise the need to review and refine provision for personal, social and health education.

At times the academy has faced exceptionally challenging circumstances as a result of incidents arising outside as well as within its own community. These have been managed sensitively, but robustly by senior leaders and governors. Their proactive stance in forging community relationships has resulted in greater stability within the academy and fewer incidents escalating as a result of local tensions. Safeguarding arrangements are secure and managed well. The inclusive ethos ensures all students are valued equally. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. Where it does occur swift and decisive action is taken.

The overwhelming view of students who spoke with inspectors was that behaviour has improved enormously. Younger students spoke warmly of good relationships with teachers, better lessons and a friendly atmosphere. Many sixth form students eagerly anticipate a bright future at university. Students say they feel safe in the academy. They

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are secure in the knowledge that should incidents of unacceptable behaviour arise these will be dealt with firmly and diffused quickly. Attendance is below average despite an improvement since the last inspection.

Senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body are united in their commitment to meet the challenges that remain. Accurate self-evaluation informs the next steps. Senior leaders and governors view the removal of special measures as a point on a longer journey to build and sustain further improvement.

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

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching to maintain the rising trend in attainment by:
  - encouraging more staff to use the approaches to promote learning that are being used by the academy's most effective teachers
  - ensuring that the practice of all teachers benefits from a more formalised approach to sharing the very effective practice that is becoming more frequent
  - engaging all staff in dialogue around the use of additional adults in lessons so that this resource has the greatest possible impact on students' learning
  - capitalising on students' increasingly positive attitudes to engage them in the debate around effective teaching and learning.
- Establish a coherent provision for personal, social and health education by:
  - carrying out a thorough audit of what is already in place
  - implementing an action plan to ensure that this aspect of the curriculum makes a consistently strong contribution to the personal development and well-being of all students.
- Raise attendance in line with the average for secondary schools by:
  - using the new newsletter and more frequent communications with parents to stress the link between attendance and attainment
  - maintaining the relentless focus on monitoring and follow-up which is making inroads to reducing rates of persistent absence.
- Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Outcomes for all groups of learners are satisfactory. Better teaching and more effective use of assessment, combined with improved behaviour and attitudes to learning, have accelerated students' progress. An increasing proportion of teachers use effective strategies to help students make rapid gains in knowledge and understanding from different starting points. Inspectors observed many students working productively in pairs or groups and they told inspectors that lessons are much better nowadays. Where learning remains satisfactory rather than good, teachers' skills are less well developed or they are reluctant to try new approaches. Consistently higher expectations have had a positive

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impact on social and moral development and in classrooms contributing to the faster pace of learning.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4, although below average, shows a rising trend. An increasing proportion of students attain good GCSE passes in mathematics, and particularly in English. A significant improvement in boys' attainment has narrowed the gap considerably with their peers nationally at age 16. Year 7 reading ages are accelerating from a low base on entry as a consequence of effective additional support and a concerted focus on literacy development across the academy. Students' special educational needs and/or disabilities are taken into account in all aspects of planning to ensure that they make satisfactory progress. Marked improvements in students' literacy and numeracy mean they are better equipped for the next steps in their lives. Persistent absence is declining and the large majority of students are punctual.

Good relationships are becoming a consistent feature in classrooms. In communal areas students generally socialise well together. They are more confident to engage in mature discussions with adults than was the case at the last inspection and are generally more respectful in their dealings with others. Students take seriously their positions as representatives on the Student Voice, or as learning mentors to younger students. Carefully planned visits and activities, locally and further afield, develop a sense of community and enrich students' experiences. Good opportunities to stay healthy include on-site advice and guidance, fresh fruit daily for all Year 7 students and a healthy lunch menu which is gaining in popularity. A comprehensive and well-attended range of lunchtime, before-and after-school sports clubs, including more innovative options such as cheerleading and circus skills, provides a healthy physical workout for boys and girls across all year groups.

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*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>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<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>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</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

## How effective is the provision?

A strengthening provision is improving outcomes for all students irrespective of age or learning need. Teaching that is satisfactory and improving makes the most of high quality resources and excellent specialist accommodation. Teachers display good subject knowledge. More frequently they are using well-planned activities that interest students and encourage them to take some responsibility for their learning. When this approach also includes skilful checks for learning and consolidates key points before moving on, progress is good. Some teachers are not as effective in applying their skills or maintaining the brisk pace fostered by their colleagues. This latter group would benefit from more systematic sharing of the highly effective practice within the academy. The use of additional adults to support learning in mainstream lessons is too variable and senior leaders have prioritised this as an area for further work. Art and drama feature prominently in displays and performances and contribute to students' satisfactory cultural development, and present opportunities for the academy to open its doors to parents and the local community.

The curriculum offers appropriate balance between academic and vocational courses. The needs of all students are at the forefront of curriculum development. New courses that stretch the more-able students in English and mathematics sit alongside robust plans to further strengthen provision for those who are potentially vulnerable or find learning difficult. The extended schools contribution, delivered and managed on-site, is a strength.

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Careful monitoring of the uptake by different groups makes this popular enrichment programme as inclusive as possible. Planning for the personal, social and health education curriculum lacks the coherence seen elsewhere.

Students are clear about the options available at transition points. Year 9 students spoke confidently about the choices they have made for Key Stage 4. The needs of potentially vulnerable students and those most at risk are afforded the highest priority through robust multi-agency partnerships managed by senior staff. As the use of assessment and progress tracking becomes more established, the timeliness and impact of intervention to counter underachievement becomes more effective.

*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 has high expectations of staff and students. She expects no less from the wider leadership team. All leaders and managers are highly visible around the academy and engage well with students. Staff who spoke with inspectors are confident in the senior leadership. A mood of optimism permeates the academy. The relentless focus on improvement is underpinned by a secure knowledge of where weaknesses remain. Senior leaders, members of the governing body and sponsors are all too aware of how far improvements, especially in behaviour and the quality of teaching have come; they are united in their determination that the academy will not slip backwards. Their collective efforts have brought cohesion and hope to a school community that at its lowest point was seriously fragmented.

The governing body has provided much needed continuity during times of change. The sponsor's close involvement in governance arrangements has given the necessary hard edge to the challenge that has been crucial in keeping the academy on track, despite some very challenging times during special measures. Safeguarding is satisfactory and inroads have been made in strengthening engagement with parents. The academy looks increasingly outward and at a number of levels has established local partnerships that make a valuable contribution to students' satisfactory learning and well-being.

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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>2</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

Achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory. The quality of teaching shows an improving trend. Lessons in the well-appointed sixth form centre take place in a purposeful atmosphere as the higher expectations permeate here. Success rates on vocational courses show a positive picture of students' achievements. Entry requirements have been raised, and work has been done at departmental level this year, to reduce the variability in performance at AS and A Level. Attendance is satisfactory. This year, more students than ever applied to university and received an offer of a place.

Students spoke positively with inspectors about their experiences, although a few felt they could be consulted better at times of change. The influence of the business and enterprise specialism is evident in the popular vocational programmes. The successes of older students are used well to raise aspirations lower down the school. Sixth formers contribute responsibly to a flourishing peer mentor programme for younger students. Improvements in the sixth form provision and outcomes since special measures derive from more effective leadership and management.

*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**

Questionnaires for parents and carers are not normally distributed by Ofsted for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



1 April 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Sheffield Park Academy, S2 1RY**

Congratulations! Yours is a satisfactory school that no longer requires special measures. Significant improvements have been made since July 2009. Behaviour is much better and the quality of teaching has improved considerably. Students now make better progress in learning, and attainment is rising. We appreciated the good manners and mature reflection that many of you showed when sharing your views.

You told us that lessons are much better and more enjoyable nowadays. You said relationships with teachers are generally good and they care about your welfare. You also said that the academy is a calmer and friendlier place and you feel safe. More sixth form students than ever go on to university to study an impressive range of degree courses. Your attendance has improved but is still below that of most secondary schools. However, inspectors were pleased to see the vast majority of you arrive on time at the start of the day. Keep it up!

Mrs Nightingale, other senior staff and members of the governing body know exactly what needs to be done to maintain the academy's upward momentum. Inspectors agree with them that further improvement will happen by:

- making sure that teachers share more frequently with one another their most effective strategies that help you to learn; and engaging you in discussions about the sorts of activities that help you make good progress
- making sure that you all have access to regular personal, social and health education
- emphasising to you and your parents the strong link between good attendance and exam success.

You can be proud of your contribution to the academy's success. Please continue to play your part in making sure that this upward trend continues.

Inspectors may visit in the future to check on the academy's progress.

Yours sincerely

Cathryn Kirby

Her Majesty's Inspector

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