

Quarrydale School

Stoneyford Road, Sutton-in-Ashfield, NG17 2DU

Inspection dates 4 – 5 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students of all abilities make good progress throughout the academy.
- The proportion achieving five A* to C passes, including in English and mathematics, is well above average and continues to rise.
- Students' good achievement, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, is due to good and sometimes outstanding teaching.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress, helped by courses that match their needs and thorough checks on their progress.
- Students enjoy the academy, behave well and feel safe. They are valued for who they are and given the confidence to succeed.
- The academy provides a broad range of courses for all students that match their needs, interest them and support their good progress.
- Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted well in an academy that values students' personal development as much as their academic skills.
- Leadership and management, including in the sixth form, are good. The headteacher leads the school effectively so that teaching has improved and achievement has risen.
- The governing body knows a lot about the school's work. Its involvement and questioning mean that governors can help the academy to make further progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Marking of students' work is inconsistent in telling them what they have done well and how to make further progress.
- Teachers do not always set work at the right level for students and sometimes the direct teaching goes on for too long.
- Not all subject leaders have a fully accurate picture of the quality of teaching and marking and the rate of progress in their subjects. Therefore, students' progress is not always as rapid as it could be.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 39 lessons, of which 12 were observed jointly with the headteacher or either of the two deputy headteachers.
- The inspectors considered the 37 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the information from 47 staff questionnaires in conducting the inspection.
- They held meetings with four groups of students, senior and subject leaders and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors observed the academy's work and considered a range of information, particularly samples of students' work and the academy's information about the achievement of all groups of students. They looked at the academy's improvement planning and the progress being made towards it, as well as records of students' behaviour and attendance, and policies to help safeguard them.

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Richard White	Additional Inspector
Louise Briggs	Additional Inspector
Alan Brewerton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Quarrydale School converted to become an academy school in February 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is above the national average.
- Most students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- There are two deputy headteachers. One focuses on teaching and learning and the other on assessment.
- The North Ashfield SPACE Centre, which is jointly funded by the four local secondary schools, supports the small number of students at high risk of exclusion.
- The academy works with Kirkby College to provide level three courses for students from both academies.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of students' progress by making sure that:
 - marking tells them what they have achieved and the next steps to take
 - all work is set at just the right level for students
 - teachers strike a balance between direct teaching and giving students time to apply their skills in independent tasks.
- Increase the impact of leaders and managers in promoting rapid progress by making sure that subject leaders:
 - understand fully their responsibilities and accountability for students' achievement and the quality of teaching and marking in their areas
 - provide written half-termly reports to the senior leadership team showing the findings of the checks they make on achievement, teaching and marking, and the actions they are taking to address any weaknesses.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards at the end of Year 11 have been significantly above average for the last two years, in the proportion of students achieving five A* to C grades, including in English and mathematics. They continue to rise.
- Students' levels on entry to Year 7 vary and are generally just below average. However, Year 10 students joined the academy with well above-average levels. Students make good progress throughout the academy, including in the sixth form. A greater proportion of students than nationally make better-than-expected progress.
- More-able students make good progress throughout the academy because the work they are given is challenging and ensures that they draw on what they already know. In a Year 9 higher ability mathematics lesson, the students achieved outstandingly because of very skilful teaching which stretched and probed their understanding.
- The academy is given the Year 7 catch-up premium to support those pupils who have not reached the expected levels in English by the end of primary school. Over half of them have now reached the levels expected of them at the end of primary school. In two terms they have made twenty months improvement in their reading ages.
- Pupil-premium funding has been used to provide a range of support, including one-to-one tuition and revision materials for those with gaps in their English and mathematical skills. The gap in attainment between eligible students and the others has fallen from six terms in English and mathematics in 2012 to four-and-a-half terms this year.
- All groups of students achieve similarly including boys and girls. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress because support is organised quickly and is very specific to students' needs. Almost three quarters of them have achieved five A* to C grades and they have exceeded their targets for A* to C passes in English and mathematics.
- Students sit GCSE examinations early if the academy considers them ready. This includes mathematics. The pass rate in Year 10 is high, although last year very few more-able students achieved the highest grades compared to nationally. The academy's information and inspection evidence points to a much greater proportion of students getting higher grades in 2013. Only a very few students study alternative courses off site and none study just alternative courses.
- A very small proportion of students spend some time at SPACE, which supports the work of the academy in reinforcing good behaviour. All students return to the academy and none have been excluded since their return.
- Students in the sixth form achieve well. There is an improving and quickening picture of progress throughout Years 12 and 13. A greater proportion of students are reaching higher levels than in previous years. Most stay on into Year 13, which represents a big increase, and following that, all students either obtain employment or enter further or higher education.

The quality of teaching is good

- Much teaching in most subjects is good, including in the sixth form. The outstanding relationships between staff and students, and between students, set an excellent climate for

learning.

- Teachers explain carefully what students need to know, understand and do by the end of the lesson and regularly repeat it as the lesson proceeds. In a good Year 9 French lesson, the students could see that each activity helped them to work towards their goals.
- Care is taken in many lessons to make sure that the work given to students is set at the right level. In particular, work for more-able students provides much more challenge and is speeding up their rate of progress. In a few lessons, however, students were given the same work, which was too hard for some and provided insufficient challenge to others.
- The pace of learning is often brisk and students are provided with a range of activities that keep them interested. In a few lessons, teachers teach directly for too long.
- Questioning is carefully targeted at the different levels at which the students work. It also helps students to consider their learning more carefully.
- Although some marking is outstanding, there is considerable inconsistency in how often work is marked and its helpfulness to students in telling them what they have achieved and what to do next. However, it is good in the sixth form.
- Support assistants provide effective guidance for those students who find some aspects of their learning difficult.
- Literacy is promoted well in the majority of lessons. In science, mathematics and music, for example, the development of students' vocabulary skills is good. Numeracy is used far less often in other subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students enjoy being at the academy and this is reflected in their above-average attendance and good behaviour. Expectations of students' behaviour are high and the small minority who do not always meet these expectations are supported in order to do so.
 - Students learn in a happy, supportive and inclusive academy, which nurtures them and gives them confidence that they can achieve.
 - The academy provides many opportunities for students to contribute to its development and to showcase their talents. The school council is taken seriously and makes a difference, such as to the canteen arrangements and lunch menus. Students are provided with a range of other roles, such as sports leaders which promote their personal development from Year 7 onwards. The sixth formers make a positive difference, through, for example, their roles as lunchtime supervisors. They are good role models.
 - Students say that they feel safe in the academy and the low incidence of bullying and the responses from Parent View support this. Students know about the different types of bullying including racist bullying.
 - The academy makes sure that students have the necessary understanding of potentially dangerous situations and practices relevant to their age, including internet safety.
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- Lessons, tutor time and assemblies, and the opportunities listed above, contribute well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, including their respect and tolerance for others.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteachers have an accurate understanding of the academy's performance and how to strengthen it further. This is reflected in the very specific improvement plan and the roles and responsibilities of the senior team.
- The academy's detailed gathering of information about students' progress provides a good starting point for the academy's work and prompt actions are taken to address any under-performance by students.
- The academy's main priority is the quality of teaching. Regular lesson observations identify where practices can be strengthened and a programme of staff training and support is based around them.
- Teachers' performance targets, similarly, focus on improving teaching. All targets are achievable and are measured in terms of students' rate of progress. Pay rises are dependent on teachers meeting their targets.
- Some subject leaders contribute to the academy's good performance. For example, the head of the sixth form leads and manages well. He has established good systems for checking students' progress and the quality of teaching which have been significant in the good progress that the students are making. The special educational needs co-ordinator follows similar good practices, leading to the good progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs towards their goals.
- However, not all subject leaders check regularly or in sufficient detail the quality of teaching, achievement and marking in their areas, or report back to the senior team their findings and the actions they are taking.
- The curriculum caters well for all students' needs and aspirations. The EBacc qualification has been greatly extended and a greater range of work-related courses are being introduced. As a result, there is good equality of opportunity and no students are discriminated against. Students enjoy the wide-ranging enrichment and after-school activities.
- The academy's sixth form partnership with Kirkby College has widened the range of courses for the students. Links with parents and their support bring great benefit to the academy in its drive to provide the best quality education possible. The academy responds quickly to parental queries or concerns, and helps them to support their children's education.
- The staff questionnaires show overwhelming support for the academy's work, including the leadership and management of the headteacher. The staff feel supported and valued in their work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors find out a lot of information about the academy for themselves, through

meeting with leaders and talking to parents, and are well informed by the headteacher. The governors understand what national data is saying about the academy's performance and where teaching is strongest and needs to be improved. They understand how pupil-premium funding is used and its impact on performance and know their role in the performance management of the staff. The governing body makes sure that safeguarding arrangements meet the statutory requirements, including for the students who are educated off-site. Their wide-ranging knowledge and commitment to the academy confirms that they can help it to become even better.

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	137857
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	413414

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
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	1018
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Heald
Headteacher	Jonathan Crone
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01623 554178
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