

Shireland Collegiate Academy

Waterloo Road, Smethwick, West Midlands, B66 4ND

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This is an exceptional academy, which has maintained and built upon the very high standards seen at the last inspection.
- Students, staff and parents are, quite rightly, proud to be associated with this academy. As one student said, 'I feel privileged to be a student here.'
- The driving force behind the academy's success is undoubtedly the gifted and dedicated headteacher. His clear, purposeful and ambitious leadership, together with unflagging support from his senior colleagues, has led to ever-improving student achievement and increasingly effective teaching.
- All groups of students make rapid progress, irrespective of their background or ability level.
- Student attainment, although below average over the last two years, is rising rapidly and most students are currently working at the levels expected of them.
- Staff are highly ambitious for students and fervent in their aim to get the best from each one, academically and personally. As a result, students grow tremendously in confidence and are encouraged to see their potential, work hard and aim high.
- Teaching is outstanding. Lessons are planned extremely well to make sure they are demanding, exciting and get the most out of all groups of students. This is underpinned by innovative use of information and computer technology (ICT).
- The behaviour of students in lessons and around the academy is impeccable. They are keen, lively, questioning and enthusiastic learners who greatly enjoy and appreciate all the academy has to offer.
- The range of subjects and courses available to students is innovative and imaginative and is extremely carefully planned to meet their precise needs and interests.
- The governing body gives a high level of challenge as well as support and successfully helps to plan and drive improvement in the academy.
- The sixth form is outstanding and displays similar high qualities to the rest of the academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 lessons or parts of lessons, including 27 that were seen together with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to students read and visited classrooms with senior staff to look at how well disabled students and those who have special educational needs were learning. Inspectors also visited lessons with senior staff to look at students' progress in mathematics, English and science, and at learning in a wide range of other subjects.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, and groups of students.
- Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at its self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of its work and examples of students' work.
- There were insufficient responses from parents for these to be viewed on the online questionnaire (Parent View). Parents' and students' responses to the academy's own recent surveys and written comments made by parents while attending parents' evenings were considered. Inspectors also analysed 102 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Michael Merchant, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Julia Morris	Additional Inspector
Lesley Voaden	Additional Inspector
Michael Lafford	Additional Inspector
Denise Newsome	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The academy opened in September 2007 and is a free-standing, non-sponsored academy, managed by the Collegiate Academy Trust.
- The very large majority of students come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, and a very high proportion speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students that are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for groups of students including looked-after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is high. There are currently very small numbers of students who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well-above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The academy does not use any alternative provision for any of its students.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by making sure that all teachers use questions in lessons which encourage all students to think deeply and give full answers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students join the academy in Year 7 with exceptionally low standards of attainment. As a result of outstanding teaching, all groups of students make rapid progress and their achievement is excellent.
- By the end of Year 11, students' attainment has risen considerably and although it is still below average, is getting better year on year. For instance, nearly a half of all students attained five or more good GCSE grades including English and mathematics in 2012. This figure is nearly double that seen three years ago and academy information shows that it is on track to rise still further in 2013.
- The proportion of students making and exceeding the expected three levels of progress in both English and mathematics is very high when compared with the national average.
- The achievement of all groups of students, including those from the wide range of different heritages and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, is similarly strong. This reflects the success of the academy's determination that all students should have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- The very high numbers of students that enter the academy speaking English as an additional language make excellent progress at developing their speaking, reading and writing skills. All teachers regard themselves as teachers of English as an additional language and they, and other adults, play an important role in supporting students.
- Across the academy, all teachers are very aware of the need to develop the reading, writing and speaking skills of students and they plan assiduously to use these skills in lessons. Very well-considered and highly effective reading support starts in Year 7 for any students who need it and this builds upon the outstanding transition processes including the extensive summer school. As a result, students read, write and speak with increasing confidence as they progress through the academy.
- The academy makes highly effective use of funding received through the Year 7 catch-up programme (extra money from the government to support those students who attained below expected levels in English and mathematics in Year 6). Through extra classes and additional support, many held on Saturday mornings, such students make rapid gains in acquiring number, reading and writing skills.
- This meticulous attention to ensuring that the needs of all are met extends particularly to disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Very well-targeted support for these students enables them to overcome many of their difficulties and make the same outstanding progress as their classmates.
- The academy uses its pupil-premium funding very effectively to support eligible students. It has provided individual help and guidance, additional tuition as well as financial support to enable them to participate in out-of-school activities and courses. This support has effectively reduced the attainment gap between these students and others so that it is much smaller than that seen nationally. In 2012, students entitled to free meals and those in local authority care attained, on average, a half of a grade less in English and two thirds of a grade less in mathematics than did other students in the academy. This was a much smaller difference than in previous years.

- Small numbers of students complete GCSE English and mathematics early. They follow a well-planned programme that is closely matched to their needs, and achieve as well as if they had taken the examinations later. They make rapid progress. Higher-attaining students are not held back by this policy of attaining the grades of which they are capable.
- The sixth form, once part of a confederation with a neighbouring school, now solely caters for students from the academy. Recent attainment and progress information, therefore, has to be treated with caution as it includes many students from other schools. The academy's own predictions, based on accurate assessments of how well students are doing, show that they are on track to achieve much higher results than in previous years. Students currently in the sixth form are making outstanding progress in lessons and a high number are meeting and exceeding their very challenging targets.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- High quality teaching is the norm at the academy and this means that students make outstanding progress. Teaching is invariably good with much that is outstanding. A striking feature of teaching is the very positive atmosphere seen in nearly all lessons. Relationships are exceptionally strong.
- Teachers expect much of students and plan lessons with great care to ensure that all are challenged to do their very best. Teachers' high expectations help students to make rapid progress.
- Most lessons are highly imaginative and make sure that students' interests and enthusiasm are captured well. As a result, students put a great deal of effort into their work and keep up very good levels of concentration. In an excellent Year 8 science lesson, students were engrossed and worked with great energy and eagerness in pairs to 'design' a creature that would be adapted to various environments. They kept up a very high level of dialogue with each other.
- Teachers make excellent use of technology to motivate students and to encourage them to be active and inquisitive in class. For instance, in the sixth form, teachers frequently develop high-powered class discussions by encouraging students to research a topic or idea on their tablet computers, which all students have, and then share the results of their research with others.
- Most teachers use questions very well to encourage students to think and debate their work with others. This is not always the case, however, and where teaching falls short of outstanding, questions are not used as well as they could be to probe students and to fully explain their answers.
- Students are given very clear individual targets to aim for in their work. Their progress is carefully checked by teachers to identify any students who are not on track to achieve their target grades and levels. A wide range of additional help and support is provided to make sure that students do not continue to fall behind.
- Teachers mark students' work regularly and provide high quality and very constructive feedback so students know how to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary and are particularly strong features of the academy.
- Systems to manage inappropriate behaviour are very well understood by students and consistently applied by staff. Exclusions are very rare.
- Students feel very safe, saying that bullying of any kind is rare, but when it does occur, it is dealt with highly effectively. Students from the wide range of cultures and heritages within the academy work and socialise together in total harmony. They know that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Attendance is above average and students invariably arrive at lessons on time. The academy pursues any students with a history of poor attendance relentlessly.
- The academy works very well with families and with other agencies to make sure that any obstacles placed in the way of students attaining what they are capable of, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, are dealt with and removed. One student told inspectors that the way the academy had worked with her to help her resolve her problems had '...changed my life ... I am so grateful to everyone at Shireland.'

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides strong and vigorous leadership and is supported by a highly effective senior team. He inspires loyalty amongst staff who work with clarity and enthusiasm in aiming to meet the academy's very high expectations for student success and its promotion of equality of opportunity for all.
- Leaders have a clear and entirely accurate view of the academy's strengths and where it can get even better. It has a strong track record of improvement and innovation based on well-formulated plans and clear action.
- The leadership and management of teaching are very effective at improving the quality of learning across the academy and this is strategically supported by an innovative use of ICT (the Learning Gateway). There is a very close link between the current teaching standards, teachers' performance and the very well-planned training and support provided for staff.
- Teachers are held to account for their performance. The targets the academy sets for teachers to improve their work are being used rigorously to reward good performance, and are based on an accurate review of teaching and progress.
- The way that students are encouraged to use their literacy skills across a wide range of subjects, especially in Years 7 to 9, means that the high numbers of students who arrive at the academy with weak skills in reading, writing and speaking are given every opportunity to catch up.
- Students enjoy many opportunities to reflect on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. This is planned for across subjects but also in the very wide range of clubs and activities beyond lessons.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors keep their skills up to date through regular training and are very well informed about how well the academy is doing with the governance portal on the Learning Gateway enabling this. They receive regular and comprehensive information from the headteacher and visit regularly to monitor the academy's work. They know where the best teaching is in the academy and, as a result, are in a strong position to contribute to academy development and improvement planning. Governors have contributed fully to the discussions on how the pupil premium funding should be spent and have kept a careful check on the impact of the extra support and guidance provided for eligible students. They set ambitious performance management targets for the headteacher and hold the headteacher to account for the way in which increases in pay are used to reward teachers. They know how any underperformance is being tackled. Governors meet all their responsibilities very well, including national requirements for safeguarding students.

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	135170
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	400161

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1115
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ashley Savill-Boss
Headteacher	Sir Mark Grundy
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 December 2010
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