

Shirebrook Academy

Common Lane, Shirebrook, Mansfield, NG20 8QF

Inspection dates

19–20 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Academic standards have risen every year since the academy opened and are well above national averages. Students make excellent progress from their starting points and their achievement is outstanding.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers carefully plan lessons that are very well matched to the needs of all their students, regardless of ability. They also use every opportunity to raise the confidence and self-esteem of all students so that they become successful learners.
- The academy's leaders have introduced highly effective measures to improve levels of literacy rapidly. As a result, all students quickly develop the literacy and communication skills necessary to make positive contributions in their lessons.
- Students behave extremely well and say that they feel very safe in school. As a result, students are extremely positive in their attitudes to school and to their learning.
- Systems for tracking students' progress are highly effective and enable staff, governors and parents to know how well students are achieving.
- Students of all abilities receive extremely well planned and targeted support from staff. Teachers know exactly how to support and challenge students to achieve their best and they devote much time to help those who fall behind.
- Raising students' attainment and progress is the academy's number one priority. Training and support for all staff is strongly focused on this single aim to exceedingly good effect.
- Academy leaders, together with governors and sponsors, know very clearly the academy's strengths and weaknesses. They use this information well to identify any concerns and take swift action to remedy them. As a result the academy continues to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered and evaluated a wide range of evidence of the academy’s work. They observed 34 teachers in 35 lessons, of which five were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons and to sessions run by teachers and outside speakers during the ‘super learning day’.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including the academy’s checks on its performance, plans for improvement, day-to-day health and safety arrangements, safeguarding measures and policy documents. Inspectors analysed the academy’s records of students’ rates of progress across the academy. They also looked at the academy’s use of the pupil premium funding. Inspectors heard students read and looked closely at their workbooks.
- Meetings were held with the academy principal, the senior leadership team and other staff in leadership roles. Inspectors met with groups of students to discuss their experiences of school. Meetings were also held with representatives from the sponsor and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of 20 responses from Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents and carers, and the questionnaires completed for the inspection by 51 members of staff. They also considered the results of surveys of students and parents and carers carried out by the academy.

Inspection team

Trevor Riddiough, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Thelma McIntosh-Clark

Additional Inspector

Martin Spoor

Additional Inspector

Peter Bailey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Shirebrook Academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The academy opened in September 2010. When its predecessor school, the Shirebrook School, was last inspected by Ofsted in 2008 it was judged to be good overall. The academy is sponsored by All Roads and Sheffield Hallam University. It is due to move into its new, purpose-built accommodation in April 2013.
- The principal was appointed to the academy in April 2010, a term before the academy opened.
- The dual specialisms of the academy are science and construction. These specialisms build on the links with the academy sponsors.
- Nearly all students are of White British heritage. Very few students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium, at 42%, is almost twice that of the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding based on the number of students in local authority care, from families where one or more parent serves in the armed forces and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is around the same as in most schools.
- The academy offers two sixth form courses in partnership with Chesterfield College. Academy staff teach these courses to Year 12 and 13 students who are registered at the college.
- A small number of students in Key Stage 4 access alternative courses at Chesterfield College, Stubbin Wood Special School and the Bolsover and Staveley Learning Centre.
- The academy meets the current government floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The inspection was carried out one week before the academy was due to move into its new premises.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maximise learning and progress even more by:
 - always providing clear guidance in marking so that all students know what they have to do to improve their work and ensuring that students respond to this advice
 - providing time and space for students to develop their own ideas independently of their teachers in all lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- When students join the academy, most are working significantly below the nationally expected standards for their ages in most subjects. Students' literacy levels are particularly low on entry.
- Students generally make outstanding progress throughout their time at the academy such that attainment is above the national average by the end of Key Stage 4; in many areas it is significantly above the national average. In 2012 the large majority of students gained five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C including in English and mathematics and almost all students gained five or more good GCSE grades.
- Attainment has risen strongly in the two years since the academy opened in 2010. Data held in the academy, supported by inspection evidence, show that attainment is set to rise further in 2013.
- The academy has been successful in narrowing the gaps in attainment between all groups of students and their peers nationally. The considerable additional support put in place to support individual students at risk of falling behind this year is going a long way towards closing these gaps entirely.
- The academy is using the pupil premium funding to provide additional tuition in English and mathematics, for revision weekends and Saturday morning workshops, to extend the opening times for the academy and to provide alternative off-site placements for students.
- The pupil premium funding is having a very positive impact, particularly on the progress for those known to be eligible for free school meals. Within the academy, gaps in average point scores (a measure used to compare overall performance at GCSE) for this group of students and all other students are closing very rapidly. These students make particularly good progress. There is only a very small difference between their attainment and that of other students.
- Students in Year 7 who did not achieve the expected Level 4 in English at the end of Key Stage 2 have received additional funding to boost their progress. This funding has been used to appoint an additional teaching assistant to accelerate the development of their basic skills. It is too soon to measure the impact of this new initiative.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs also make exceptionally good progress. This is because their individual needs are quickly diagnosed and support is designed around both their personal and academic needs.
- Early entry for GCSE English and mathematics has been used well to help students gain early success in these subjects. Students who take the examinations early continue to study these subjects, aiming for a higher grade at a later date. Others use the additional time to pursue these subjects at AS level or successfully concentrate on other subjects.
- In the two courses that are taught in the sixth form, students generally achieve grades that are well above the national average. They make excellent progress because the courses are well suited to their needs and students are taught well.
- Students participate fully in lessons, rise to the challenges that they have been set and are keen to achieve their best.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Staff have focused their efforts relentlessly to develop and maintain a consistently high quality of teaching and learning. In the very best lessons, high levels of interaction and practical, paired and group work were evident. Teachers use a range of techniques and methods to tailor work to students' different capabilities. Consequently, all students want to engage and contribute very well to their lessons.
- Many lessons are fun and humour is common-place. For example, in a Year 11 Spanish lesson, the teacher played 'Simon Says' to generate a fast paced activity to consolidate the learning of vocabulary around jobs and professions. Students really appreciate this approach and one said 'a fun teacher who is like a friend is the best teacher to have'.
- Teachers know their students well and relationships are highly productive. Every lesson is planned well to generate high levels of pace and progress. They are also designed carefully to develop students' personal confidence where it is safe to make mistakes and to learn from them.
- In many lessons, students show many characteristics of independent learning; for example, they are given time to explore their own ideas and are challenged by probing questions to test their understanding. However, this practice is not entirely consistent and occasionally lessons are a little too teacher-led and do not provide students with as many opportunities to learn on their own.
- Marking is regular and commonly provides clear advice on the next steps to learning, which encourages students to respond and improve their own work. These positive features are not yet universal, however, across the whole academy.
- The quality of teaching support provided for those with identified learning needs is also outstanding. All staff, including teaching assistants, understand fully what individual students require and they are well prepared and equipped to tailor work to match such requirements.
- Opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. For example in a Year 9 science lesson, the ethics of pollution were explored very effectively with students. A Year 10 religious education lesson on injustice addressed moral and social issues which the students' approached with maturity and an understanding of complex ideas. During the 'super learning day' students were able to empathise very well with people who are very different from themselves through simulation and role play.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are taught very well at every opportunity. Students are given regular opportunities to develop their reading, writing and speaking skills in their lessons. All lessons have a literacy focus and students are often asked to read aloud and explain texts. The use of reading schemes and opportunities for guided reading boosts students' literacy skills further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The excellent behaviour seen around the academy is underpinned by a comprehensive behaviour policy which is well understood by both teachers and students. High expectations are set, modelled and met through a clear system that applies an appropriate balance of encouragement, support, rewards and sanctions.

- Students say that they like the academy's stance on behaviour because they know where they stand. They like being noticed and rewarded for their efforts and most willingly and readily take responsibility for their own behaviour. They are supported to do this through student ambassadors and the head boy and girl, who provide excellent role models for others.
- A strength of the academy is the considerable care given to individual students. Individual support packages are in place to address the specific needs of students. The help of specialists is enlisted from within and outside the academy to take care of any specific learning, behavioural or attendance problems to very good effect. All this is done in close partnership with parents.
- Support groups aimed specifically at boys, girls and those who are gifted and talented but who have low self-confidence have been set up to reinforce their belief in themselves. These students are given opportunities to shine such as in their involvement in high profile academy events.
- All students in Years 10 and 11 have learning mentors, such as from a local university, to support their day-to-day work, help them with their examination preparations and raise their aspirations. These students are particularly proud of their achievements and show gratitude to the people who have helped them. This is exemplified by one student who commented, 'If it wasn't for Shirebrook, I wouldn't be where I am now'.
- The curriculum is tailored very well to meet individual needs. Students on alternative placements achieve well in their chosen courses. The impact of these arrangements, evidenced by a review of case studies, shows these students' improved attendance, reduced exclusions and significantly improved attitudes to their learning.
- Both parents and students report that the academy is an enjoyable and a safe place to be. Incidents of bullying are rare and students are well-prepared to deal with all types of bullying, including cyber and homophobic bullying. Student ambassadors are directly involved in teaching younger students how to stay safe. Assemblies and 'super learning days' have taught students very well about e-safety.
- Attendance levels continue to rise and are above average.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The principal, ably supported by the senior leadership team, has high ambitions for the development of the academy. Monitoring and evaluation are highly effective in the early identification of strengths and weaknesses which lead to clearly defined actions for further improvement.
- Senior leaders delegate well and middle leaders play a vital role in driving a programme of staff development in their areas. They support teachers to get even better by observing their work on a regular basis and by helping them to participate in relevant professional training courses aimed at improving their teaching and, hence, students' attainment and progress.
- The academy manages teachers' performance exceptionally well. All teachers have performance targets that are linked to the academy's improvement priorities which teachers say give them a useful focus for their work.
- Central to the success of the academy has been the establishment of ambitious target setting, linked to detailed tracking of students' progress. This leads to effective interventions for all identified individuals and groups so that all students are supported to achieve extremely well.

Consequently, the academy is highly effective in promoting equal opportunities.

- The tracking data is used by teachers and heads of department to plan highly effective lessons, to make regular checks on students' progress and to provide interventions when required to help and support students who are behind or struggling with their work. Senior leaders and governors use the same information to gain a full overview of performance across all subjects.
- The academy sponsors have taken a lead role in funding and overseeing the new building work. They also provide useful additional funds for staff training and development. The academy makes good use of its school improvement partner to verify its own quality assurance and provide an external view of performance across the academy.
- Subjects are organised in an innovative way and designed to maximise achievement for all. A one-year option system allows for a wide range of subjects to be offered at Key Stage 4. It provides good opportunities for personal development through 'super learning days', and memorable experiences through enrichment activities and trips abroad.
- Parent View, and other school-based surveys carried out reflect the overwhelming view from parents that they highly value all that the academy does for their children.
- A track record of improvement and a widely held belief in the potential of every student mean that the academy's commitment to inclusion is strong. As a result, the academy has won the respect and trust of the community that it serves. The widely held ambition for an inclusive school that raises aspirations in the area and reaches out to the community it serves is a reality here.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring to the academy much useful experience and expertise. They receive regular information on all aspects of the academy's work and show a deep interest in the teaching, students' achievement, subject performance and behaviour. Formal meetings, sub-committee meetings, visits and informal contact enable governors to maintain a good overview of the academy's work which is then widely shared with staff and parents. The governors have a very good understanding of how well teachers are doing in terms of the progress that their students make. This helps the governors to accurately assess teachers' performance against the pay they receive. Governors receive regular and detailed information about the pupil premium and its impact so that they can assess how effectively it is being used. They ensure that statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding students, are met. The governing body, together with sponsors, have played a crucial role in securing the vision as well as the funds required for the new building, thereby securing a strong future for the academy.

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	136127
Local authority	Not Applicable
Inspection number	399780

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	712
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon West
Principal	Julie Bloor
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01623 742722
Fax number	01623 742057
Email address	admin@shirebrookacademy.org

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

