

Serlby Park Academy

Whitehouse Road, Bircotes, Doncaster, DN11 8EF

Inspection dates 12–13 February 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.

- Achievement is good in the primary and secondary phases. From low starting points, pupils reach average levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This represents good progress.
- Pupils' attainment in GCSE courses has risen markedly and reached national averages in 2012. Pupils make good progress in the secondary phase, especially in mathematics, science and modern languages.
- The sixth form requires improvement because pupils do not make enough good progress.
- Teaching is good in the primary and secondary phases and pupils enjoy learning. Lessons have clear objectives, interesting learning activities and good resources.
- Relationships are good and pupils feel safe at school. A strong sense of community and good behaviour contribute to the calm atmosphere and good learning in the academy.
- Leaders' have high expectations. They have taken robust action to improve achievement and the quality of teaching in the primary and secondary phases.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching in the sixth form does not always provide enough challenge. Some pupils are not gaining the skills and confidence they need to learn independently.
- Checks on the quality of teaching in the sixth form have only recently been implemented.
- Attainment is lower in English than in mathematics from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 11.
- Pupils' progress in reading and writing is uneven in the primary phase. In the secondary phase, higher-ability pupils do not make as much progress in English as others.
- Teaching does not consistently provide enough challenge for higher-ability pupils. Marking and feedback are not consistently good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons, including seven jointly observed with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to a number of primary pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Principal Designate, senior and subject leaders, representatives of the sponsor and members of the governing body. They held discussions with groups of primary, secondary and sixth-form pupils about the quality of their educational experience.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the academy's records, assessment information and improvement plans.
- The inspection team also took account of responses from 41 staff to inspection questionnaires. No responses were available from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Bernard Campbell, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Thelma McIntosh-Clark

Additional Inspector

Richard Masterton

Additional Inspector

Patrick Cook

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Serlby Park Academy is an all-age school with a primary phase, secondary phase and a sixth form. It is of average size for a secondary school. The sixth form is small. More pupils than average join and leave the school part-way through their education.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for some pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is low.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The academy specialises in business and enterprise and in modern languages. A small number of pupils currently attend work-based courses off-site. A few pupils attend another academy in a reciprocal arrangement with partner academies.
- The academy exceeds the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The academy opened in September 2011. It is sponsored by the School Partnership Trust Academies. It was formerly Serlby Park, a 3-18 Business and Enterprise Learning Community.
- Two new assistant principals were appointed to the secondary phase in September 2011. In September 2012, the Principal went on secondment and was replaced by the Principal Designate. At the same time, a new Head of Primary was seconded to the academy. The School Partnership Trust Academies has also seconded a primary and a secondary school improvement officer to contribute to leadership and management for the equivalent of one day a week.
- A privately run pre-school setting is based on the secondary site and is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in the sixth form by:
 - providing sixth-form pupils with greater intellectual challenge
 - developing their skills and confidence to take the initiative and learn independently
 - demonstrating more clearly how pupils can write answers at higher levels
 - checking the quality of sixth-form teaching more rigorously
 - more rigorously analysing the progress of sixth-form pupils on courses at different academies within the consortium.
- Improve teaching throughout the academy to outstanding by:
 - providing more consistent challenge for higher-ability pupils
 - making more precise use of assessment, including checking learning orally in class and through written feedback.
- Improve attainment in English throughout the academy by:
 - improving pupils' skills in communication, language and literacy in the early years
 - improving pupils' reading and writing skills in Key Stage 1
 - ensuring that pupils make consistently good progress in reading and writing in Key Stage 2

- ensuring that higher-ability pupils make better progress in English in the secondary phase.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills well below those typical for their age. By the end of the Reception year, an average proportion of pupils reach a good level of development in most areas of learning. However, the proportion with well-developed skills in communication, language and literacy is below average.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and attainment shows an improving trend. In 2012, attainment almost reached the average in mathematics and writing but remained well below average in reading. In Year 1, the proportion of pupils that met the expected standard in the national screening check of their knowledge of letters and sounds was a little above average.
- Current academy data shows that the majority of year groups in Key Stage 2 are making good progress. In 2012, pupils in Year 6 made good progress from Key Stage 1 in both English and mathematics. Their attainment was average at the end of Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils that gained the higher Level 5 was above average in reading and writing. Overall, attainment was stronger in mathematics than in English.
- Primary-age pupils make good progress because teachers pitch their tasks at the right level. Both boys and girls are eager to learn and develop their ideas and confidence through purposeful talk. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often, and the school engages parents effectively in supporting reading. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are fully integrated from an early age and make good progress.
- At the end of Year 11, GCSE results are average. This represents good progress because the year group which took GCSE examinations in 2012 began with standards that were well below average at the beginning of Year 7. In 2012, attainment at the end of Year 11 was significantly higher than in previous years.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics, science and modern languages. Attainment is lower in English than in mathematics. In English, progress is average because higher-ability pupils do not match the good progress made by lower- and middle-ability pupils.
- GCSE results are good in science and modern languages. This is the result of good teaching, a flexible science curriculum and a good amount of time for studying modern languages. Weaker results in humanities and in art and design subjects are due to the legacy of students taking one-year GCSE courses, entering early, and achieving low results. These arrangements were changed and internal assessments show that pupils now taking these subjects are on course for much better results in 2013. Increased numbers of pupils are taking and succeeding in GCSE courses.
- Secondary pupils' positive attitudes make a good contribution to learning. They collaborate effectively in class activities and discussion, listen well and respect the views of others. Some articulate their ideas confidently and others are developing these skills. Additional support for pupils with weaker reading or comprehension skills has been introduced in the current year. It is too early to judge its impact.
- Funding through the pupil premium provides a wide range of interventions to support targeted pupils, including catch-up classes in English and mathematics and a parent support adviser. In 2012 in Key Stages 2 and 4, these pupils reached higher standards than this group nationally.

- The attainment of pupils that enter the sixth form is below average. Sixth-form pupils make average progress. Their results are below average at AS level and A level. Some sixth form pupils lack the skills and confidence to take initiatives and learn independently.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching in the primary phase is good. A little is outstanding and some requires improvement. Teachers have high expectations, know pupils well and generate a 'can do' atmosphere so pupils respond enthusiastically and enjoy learning. Lessons are carefully planned with clear objectives and well-designed tasks for pupils of different abilities. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to lead small groups and to support pupils who need extra help.
- Pupils use self- and peer-assessment to look at their work objectively and critically. For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils used a visualiser to appraise the creative examples of symmetry they had produced. Questioning is used well to probe and extend pupils' responses and clarify meaning. Sometimes, higher-ability pupils are not fully challenged. The quality of marking and feedback is not consistently good.
- In the secondary phase, most teaching is good, with examples of outstanding teaching. A little requires improvement. Clear objectives are presented at the beginning of each lesson and good encouragement is given to pupils to achieve higher levels. Lessons are active and enjoyable. In an outstanding French lesson the teacher led work on the verb 'aller' using a pop video clip. As well as providing inspiration, the teacher skilfully checked and consolidated understanding at each stage of the sequence of well-paced and precisely-focused short tasks.
- In good teaching, the careful planning of tasks, well-designed resources and expert guidance successfully promote independent learning. Good questioning engages a wide range of pupils and develops their understanding. On some occasions, tasks lack pace or focus and teachers do not check effectively enough how well pupils are learning.
- Marking often provides specific praise for the skills shown and gives helpful guidance on the next steps to take. Pupils have recently begun to respond in writing to correct spellings or complete a small task. A whole-school initiative has recently improved the quality of presentation in books.
- An extensive programme of assessment and intervention effectively supports the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as those who are underachieving. Across both primary and secondary phases, pupils are supported by well-trained teaching assistants and outside agencies.
- Teaching requires improvement in the sixth form. Teachers do not always provide sufficient intellectual challenge or specific enough guidance on how to write higher-level answers. Teaching does not succeed well enough in overcoming students' lack of verbal and intellectual confidence. Sometimes teachers do too much work for the students rather than challenge them to develop their initiative and independence.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The climate in the academy conveys a strong sense that all pupils contribute to the school

community and are valued. Pupils at all levels of ability display positive attitudes to learning, and disruption to learning is rare.

- Pupils are respectful and polite to each other and to visitors. Survey information from parents and staff, and discussion with students, shows that they consider behaviour to be good.
- Behaviour is managed well and with greater consistency in the current school year. Exclusions have fallen and no pupil has been excluded this year. The academy has a wide range of strategies and a good range of provision which enables pupils with behavioural difficulties to improve their behaviour over time.
- Pupils feel safe at school and have a good awareness of how to keep safe. Bullying is rare and pupils are confident that the school deals with bullying swiftly and effectively. Sixth-form students who attend courses on other sites feel secure about these arrangements. The few pupils attending work-based learning have their attendance and progress checked appropriately.
- Current attendance is in line with national averages for primary and secondary schools. Pupils are generally punctual for lessons.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have improved achievement in the primary and secondary phases but not in the sixth form. The Principal Designate demonstrates a strong drive for improvement and communicates high expectations of behaviour and achievement. Self-evaluation is accurate and action plans are implemented promptly and effectively to tackle identified priorities.
 - Senior leaders in the primary and secondary phases have improved the quality of teaching and learning with well-targeted programmes to improve weaker teaching. The use and analysis of assessment data is robust and contributes to effective systems of accountability. Reviews of pupils' progress take place frequently and routinely analyse the progress of pupils of all abilities, in all years and all subjects. This comprehensive approach has led to earlier identification of underachievement, quicker action to support learners and improved progress by pupils.
 - In the first year of the academy, senior leaders checked the academy's performance. In the current year, year group and subject leaders have now also taken on responsibility for checking pupil progress and for carrying out other quality assurance activities such as checks on teachers' planning, the quality of pupils' work and its marking, and finding out pupils' views.
 - Teachers have also taken greater responsibility for analysing data on the progress of pupils and have become more active in identifying concerns and acting on them. Performance management is rigorous and teachers who have not demonstrated consistently good teaching have not received a pay increase.
 - Leadership and management in the primary phase are good. Leaders are enthusiastic and communicate high expectations. The primary leadership team is newly established and some staff are relatively new to their roles. As a result, new policies and procedures have yet to be fully implemented and consistently applied.
 - The current primary curriculum has redressed an imbalance between the core curriculum and other subjects. The planning of topics takes good account of pupils' interests and abilities. The secondary curriculum has enabled more pupils to take GCSE rather than vocational subjects. A
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wide range of extra-curricular activities for pupils of all ages contributes well to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- The sixth-form curriculum provides good choice through the wide range of options available at partner academies. Leaders have not analysed the comparative performance of pupils taught at Serlby Park and other academies with sufficient clarity. Few lesson observations of sixth form teaching have been undertaken.
 - The academy involves parents particularly well in the primary phase. In both primary and secondary phases, the staff communicate well with parents and attendance is good at parents' evenings, school concerts and drama productions.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well informed about the performance of the academy and the progress being made on key issues. Governors carry out regular, well-focused visits to learn first-hand about the academy's provision and to evaluate the impact of their decisions. The governing body is supportive and challenging when holding the school to account and governors show a good understanding of actions and their impact. They are well-informed about the quality of teaching and the use of pupil premium funding. They undertake their role in agreeing pay increases for teachers robustly. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
 - The School Partnership Trust Academies holds the governors effectively to account for the performance of the school, and the governors hold the trust to account for the impact of the professional development and support it has provided. The School Partnership Trust Academies provides a strong framework for school improvement through additional support for school leadership. The trust's school improvement officers have helped relatively new leaders to increase the pace of change. It provides good access to a wide range of professional development from partner schools which has improved teaching and learning. It also provides a robust system of performance management for the Principal.
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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	137141
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	399845

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	3-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	966
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Hirst
Principal	Christine Edwards (Principal Designate)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01302 742535
Fax number	01302 752912
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