

George Salter Academy

Claypit Lane, West Bromwich, B70 9UW

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well in this academy, particularly in English, because of the good teaching and the exceptional quality of care they receive.
- Behaviour is exemplary and students are proud to be members of their academy community. They are polite and courteous, have highly positive attitudes to learning and show respect for each other and their academy environment.
- Measures to ensure students are kept safe whilst in the academy are outstanding.
- Strong leadership from the principal, who leads by example, means the academy has been resolute in building on strengths and tackling weaknesses in teaching.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, are highly ambitious and are committed to improving the academy, and to make certain all students thrive and achieve their best.
- The sixth form is outstanding; it prepares students exceptionally well for the next stage in their lives.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Too few students, including some of those supported by additional government funding, make really rapid progress, particularly in mathematics, because they are not always stretched enough by challenging teaching.
- In a few instances, agreed policies for marking and the setting of students' targets are not followed consistently by staff.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 52 lessons, including eleven that were observed jointly with senior leaders. They also observed an assembly, form times, breaks and lunchtimes and also visited the breakfast club.
- An inspector was shown around the school by two students from Year 8 and looked specifically at how students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted around the academy.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, vice-principals, other senior and subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and seven other members. The lead inspector also spoke with representatives from the academy’s sponsor, which included a telephone conversation with the academy’s educational advisor.
- Inspectors spoke with four groups of students in meetings, as well as at other times in lessons and around the academy at breaks and lunchtimes.
- An inspector also met with a parent who requested to speak to an inspector during the inspection.
- The inspection team considered the views of the 54 parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and analysed the 66 responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire.
- A variety of information was analysed about examination results, students’ progress, their attendance and behaviour and other aspects of students’ personal development and achievement. The inspection team also viewed a range of documents including the academy’s self-evaluation, results of the academy’s own ways of gathering the views of parents and carers and its records relating to the safeguarding of students.

Inspection team

Denah Jones, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Susan Fennell

Additional Inspector

Jeremy Seymour

Additional Inspector

Paul O’Shea

Additional Inspector

Michael Hiscox

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- George Salter Academy became an academy in September 2007 and is sponsored by the Ormiston Academies Trust (OAT). It is much larger than the average secondary school and has a large sixth form.
- The post-16 centre is part of a consortium with three other sixth form centres (Bristnall Hall Academy, Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy and Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School).
- The principal is supporting the development of sixth form provision in other sixth form centres across the Ormiston Academies Trust.
- Almost two-thirds of the students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A large proportion comes from Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani backgrounds. Almost half of students in the academy have a first language which is believed not to be English.
- Almost half of students in the academy are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported by school action plus or with a statement is low and the proportion supported at school action is average.
- There are currently 43 students who access alternative or off-site, provision for courses in construction (The Hub, Smethwick Enterprise Centre), horticulture (The Allotment, Wednesbury) and hair and beauty (Wednesfield High School, Wolverhampton). Most students are from Year 10, but there are also a small number in Years 9 and 11 currently accessing this provision.
- The school operates an Inclusion Centre on site for a small number of students and also a breakfast club.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more students, including those eligible for pupil premium funding, make outstanding progress by:
 - using the information that teachers have about students' previous progress and attainment to plan work that is always appropriately challenging and makes students really think, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve teaching so that it is always at least good and that more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that agreed policies regarding the setting and follow up of students' targets are consistently implemented by all staff
 - sharing the high quality marking practice that exists in some subjects so that all marking helps students understand how to improve their work so that it is really impressive.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Until recently, students have tended to join the academy with attainment that is well below average in English and in mathematics. This is now changing and, apart from students in Year 11, all other year groups show broadly average attainment on entry. About a third of students in each of these year groups now arrive with above expected levels in their results at Key Stage 2.
- In 2013, 59% of students attained grade C or above in five or more GCSEs including English and mathematics, which represents clear improvement on 2012 and means the academy's results on this measure are now broadly the same as the national average.
- Achievement in English has been consistently strong in 2012 and 2013. The large majority of students make good and often outstanding progress from their different starting points. Evidence seen and accepted by inspectors indicates that this picture of strong and secure progress is set to continue in the future.
- Achievement in mathematics is not as strong as it is in English. In 2013, about the same proportion of students as that seen nationally made the progress that was expected of them in mathematics but a smaller proportion than the national average made better than expected progress.
- Inspection evidence shows that progress is improving in mathematics for students currently in the academy as a result of changes to the policy on early entry to examinations and the introduction of more challenging courses for middle and high ability students.
- More-able students made better progress than similar students nationally in English and in mathematics and attain well across all of their subjects.
- The pupil premium has been used to provide revision programmes for students during half-term holidays, individual study support with an 'academic coach' and additional staff in English and mathematics to reduce class size and to create opportunities for individual support sessions. This is improving the achievement of students eligible for this funding. In English in 2013, students who were eligible for free school meals were less than half a GCSE grade behind those not eligible, improving from more than a grade behind in 2012. In mathematics, students who were eligible for free school meals were about a quarter of a GCSE grade behind those not eligible, improving from almost a whole GCSE grade behind in 2012.
- Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani students are well supported and their achievement is improving. Pakistani students made less progress in mathematics in 2013, than similar students nationally and about the same progress as similar students nationally in English. Information provided by the academy shows that Pakistani students are now making better progress in mathematics. Indian and Bangladeshi students are very well supported in English and in mathematics and make better progress than similar groups nationally.
- In English and in mathematics in 2013, disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action made less progress than expected given their starting points. However, those supported at school action plus or through a statement generally made at least expected progress. Information provided by the academy shows that the progress made by all groups of disabled students and those with special educational needs currently in the school is improving.

- The literacy levels of students when they start the academy continue to be a concern. Reading age tests for current Year 7 students show that almost 90% of the year group have a reading age below that of their actual age. Following intensive support to accelerate their reading, students improve considerably. Many of these students are supported by Year 7 catch-up funding which is being used effectively to improve their progress in English.
- Students who attend alternative off-site provision achieve well in their chosen courses. They attend for the equivalent of half a day each week and their progress is checked carefully by the academy as is their attendance and punctuality.
- Achievement in the sixth form is very strong. Students make rapid progress from what were below average starting points when they entered the sixth form. Their results at AS and at A level are broadly average. Students also make very good progress in the wide range of level 1 and level 2 courses that are available to them. Each year, an increasing number of sixth form students successfully gain entry to further and higher education, increasing the employment opportunities that are available to them.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is usually good across the academy and there is an increasing proportion that is outstanding, especially in the sixth form, which is helping students to achieve well.
- As a result of the academy's excellent support for teachers' professional development, teaching is increasingly good and much is outstanding. This judgement by inspectors is confirmed by senior leaders' records of checks on the quality of teaching over time.
- Good and outstanding teaching in subjects such as English, performing arts, art and law were characterised by teachers ensuring students were exceptionally engaged in and by their work. In these lessons students eagerly found things out for themselves and readily helped others to learn. Teachers devised tasks and activities that, right from the start of the lesson, provided the level of challenge that ensured students were able to extend their learning to the full.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to prompt students to think deeply about their answers and to reflect on the quality of their work and that of others and to improve it. This was seen in a Year 7 music lesson, in which a group of talented musicians were able to develop and improve their individual parts, and go to give a high quality performance of ABBA's 'Dancing Queen'.
- Teaching assistants generally make a positive contribution in lessons, giving effective support to those who need it. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the teaching assistant ably helped a small group to use written calculation methods for division as weaknesses here were restricting the progress they could make with their work on ratio.
- Students' work is marked regularly and in most, though not all, subjects makes it clear to students how they are to improve. Teachers do not always ensure their advice is acted on by students, however, and this slows their progress. Similarly, teachers do not always check that, once targets have been set, they are then met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

- The behaviour of students in the academy is outstanding.
- Visitors cannot help but be impressed by the way in which students act as ambassadors for the academy. They are extremely proud of their academy and talk about the 'George's' family.
- Students show highly positive attitudes to their learning and their conduct in lessons and around the academy is exemplary. They show respect for each other and other adults. Students from different backgrounds get on well together and live up to the academy's motto, 'One World in One School'.
- Students are fully committed to improving their learning and this is seen in the large number of students who attend Saturday catch-up sessions in a wide range of subjects.
- Students with a wide range of needs are very well supported through the Inclusion Centre, breakfast club and other interventions.
- Academy leaders rigorously record and monitor all incidents of poor behaviour. Teachers apply behaviour policies consistently and there are now very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
- Parents, staff and students are highly positive about behaviour and safety in the academy. Academy leaders and governors actively seek the views of parents and carers. For example, at options evenings and parents' evenings, parents and carers are invited to complete a questionnaire on their views.
- The academy's work to ensure that students are safe and secure is outstanding and students know how to keep themselves safe. Safety is a priority for academy leaders as a result of the extensive building works currently taking place around the academy site. Students move around currently crowded corridors and stairs in a very orderly way.
- Attendance has improved year on year and is above the national average. Academy leaders carry out regular checks on attendance and are reducing the number of students who are frequently absent. This figure is now well below the national average.
- Students know about the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying. An assembly on e-safety was very thought-provoking and made clear to students the consequences of thoughtless comments or actions. Incidents of bullying are very rare but when they do occur are dealt with very quickly and highly effectively by teachers.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The principal and senior leaders are passionate and committed to developing this academy into a centre of excellence. They accurately identify areas that need improvement and then work hard to bring this about using a range of very imaginative strategies. As a result, there is an increasing amount of teaching that is good or outstanding and the care students receive is exceptional.
- The curriculum is very well-designed and is a strong feature of this academy. It offers students a wide range of well-taught vocational and traditional academic courses that hold their interest and encourage them to 'aim high'. Where students have a particular interest in the performing arts they have the opportunity to develop their talent through additional lessons in Years 7 and

8. Students in Year 9 have the opportunity to specialise in areas they choose and to start their Key Stage 4 course early.

- The sixth form curriculum is outstanding. The school has paid careful attention to ensuring that the study plan for all students, whatever their ability and prior achievement, allows them access to courses at levels 1, 2 or 3 or to combinations of these in a way that meet their needs and interests. Students are also able to re-sit GCSEs in English and mathematics or to take additional GCSEs if they wish. Work placements are also available for students. The school ensures students, both in the sixth form and in the main school, receive independent advice about their career options and consequently, they are well-prepared for and informed about life after they leave.
- Students are provided with a very wide range of sporting, spiritual, cultural and social activities organised as part of the curriculum and out of hours. This multitude of very effective activities contributes exceptionally well to students' strong personal development. Students organise lunches and concerts in a home for the elderly, there is an enormous amount of charitable work, clubs and out of hours activities are numerous and there are over 30 performing arts performances that take place each year. Students also have the opportunity to take part in visits to places in the UK and further afield such as Venice, Italy, Berlin and the USA. During the inspection a Year 7 lunchtime choir practice and an Information Technology club were very well attended.
- Academy leaders carry out frequent checks on the quality of teaching by observing lessons and checking on the quality of marking. Findings from this are then used to carefully plan training which is tailored to individual teachers' needs. Where teaching requires improvement, leaders quickly intervene and provide support from an outstanding teacher who helps them to develop their teaching skills so that students make better progress.
- Most of the academy's subject leaders lead their subjects exceptionally well. They are given opportunities to develop their leadership skills and take on whole academy responsibilities, such as leading projects to improve the quality of teaching, or to improve support for students.
- The academy has further strengthened its senior leadership team through a seconded post to oversee the use of the pupil premium. As a result this funding is being closely monitored to check it is used to good effect and is improving the achievement of students entitled to additional support.
- Improving the literacy skills of students is a priority for the academy. Students with very low reading ages attend a breakfast club where they are taught to decode words using letter sound combinations (phonics) and taught to read using de-codable reading books. Transport is provided for any students who may find it difficult to arrive in time.
- New systems have been introduced to monitor students' achievement by making better use of the information provided by staff. This is used systematically by senior leaders and subject leaders to check on the progress of different groups of students, such as disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Where students are not making the progress they should, subject leaders intervene quickly to provide additional support.
- The academy, led by the principal, has developed strong links with the other schools involved in post-16 provision. The academy's expertise and experience in this area is now being shared with other academies in the trust to further develop provision in their centres.
- The sponsor has provided good support for the academy and helped improved leaders' oversight

of teaching through its own review of its quality.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is highly ambitious for the academy and is developing and improving its understanding of all aspects of the academy’s performance. Newly appointed governors have completed on-line training modules available for them and they have received additional training through the academy’s sponsor.
- Governors know the key challenges facing the academy, such as in improving mathematics and reducing the gaps in achievement for students supported by pupil premium funding. They challenge the principal effectively and their searching questions are recorded in governors’ minutes of meetings.
- They support the principal in checking the performance of teachers to make sure this is rigorous and that only the best teachers are rewarded for their work.
- Governors ensure that all requirements relating to safeguarding are met in full and regularly reviewed.

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	135234
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	440424

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1170
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Wall
Principal	Mick Green
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2010
Telephone number	0121 5534665
Fax number	0121 5255082
Email address	principal@georgesalter.com

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