

George Salter Collegiate Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135234
Local Authority	NA
Inspection number	345423
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Andrew Cook HMI

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
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1072
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Murray
Headteacher	Mr Mick Green (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	7 January 2010
School address	Claypit Lane West Bromwich West Midlands
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 49 lessons, spending approximately 21 hours observing teaching and students' learning. During the lesson observations inspectors took time to look through students' work books. Meetings were held with governors, senior staff and the managing director of Ormiston, one of the sponsors of the academy. Documents including action plans, monitoring reports and assessment data, were scrutinised. Inspectors talked with students on many occasions over the two days and held more formal discussions with groups of Years 7, 11 and sixth form students. Inspectors analysed 250 student questionnaires, 236 parent and carer questionnaires and 83 staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is rising across all year groups
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in improving the quality of teaching through introducing assessment to support learning strategies
- the impact of care, guidance and support on the learning and personal development of vulnerable groups of pupils
- whether work to reduce persistent absenteeism is effective.

Information about the school

George Salter Collegiate Academy opened in September 2007 along with the partner Shireland Academy. The academy had existed previously as George Salter High School. The sponsors of the academy are Ormiston Trust and Shireland Learning. There is an executive principal, who mainly manages all human resource matters, admissions and exclusions, finance and the online learning provision. The work to improve pupils' outcomes, the quality of provision and most of the other key roles of leadership is led by the principal and two vice principals along with the senior leadership team. The principal is accountable to the core collegiate academy trust team which is led by the executive principal. Governance for the two academies is the responsibility of the collegiate academy trust board. The academy also has its own local governing body. The academy has specialisms in the arts and sports. Most of the sixth form provision takes place at the George Salter site with a few courses taking place at Shireland Academy and another local school. The number of students attending the academy continues to grow. Just over half are from minority ethnic backgrounds with most having English as an additional language. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average, although the proportion of students with a statement of special educational need is below average.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

George Salter Academy offers students an outstanding education.

Students make outstanding progress.

In 2009, 96% of students gained 5 GCSE A* to C grades, well above the national average.

Students' attainment in English and mathematics has improved strongly and is currently much closer to average.

Students' behaviour is exemplary.

The quality of care and support given to students has an extremely positive impact on how well they learn and on their personal development.

The curriculum is exceptionally well matched to the needs and interests of students.

The quality of teaching is good.

The role of parents and carers in helping their children to succeed is valued.

Provision in the sixth form is rapidly improving and successfully raising students' aspirations.

Leaders and managers have an impressive track record in bringing about improvement, for example, in improving the quality of teaching.

The drive and determination of the senior leadership team to raise standards are relentless. There is a culture of 'must do better' that promotes searching monitoring and evaluating. The principal's enthusiasm and passion to improve the life chances of students have won over the support of staff. Morale among staff is very high. Almost all of the staff chose to complete questionnaires, and every one said the school was well led and that they felt involved in what the academy is trying to achieve. Most parents and carers and students agree that the academy is all about helping learners to succeed, for example, 97% of those students who completed questionnaires said they learned a lot in lessons.

Leaders at all levels appreciate that GCSE examination results in English and mathematics are not yet high enough. The effective work leaders have undertaken to improve the quality of teaching has not had the intended impact on marking, which could be more diagnostic so that it helps students to know how to improve. Leaders also agree that the impact of ongoing checks on students' attendance is not effective enough to evaluate fully any actions taken to secure improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise students' attainment in English and mathematics so that it exceeds the national average by:
 - maintaining and strengthening a well qualified, skilled team of specialist English and mathematics teachers and leaders
 - ensuring teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9 has a greater focus on developing basic and functional skills in English and mathematics
 - restructuring the mathematics department to ensure that planned developments are implemented successfully and monitoring has impact
 - improving the monitoring of study support.
- Use teachers' marking more effectively to help students understand what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve by:
 - identifying key elements of effective marking so that all teachers know what to aim for
 - improving the monitoring of marking and ensure follow up action has impact.
- Ensure students' attendance is good by:
 - using the full range of powers where necessary for students whose attendance is below 80%
 - conducting parental interviews for all students whose attendance is below 80%, agreeing an attendance contract outlining what action will be taken
 - producing individual action plans for the few students at risk of persistent absenteeism (attendance 80 - 90%), in particular to emphasise to Year 11 students an attendance requirement of over 92% for admission to sixth form.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Inspectors usually saw students who were enthusiastic and interested in what they were learning. In lessons, students work effectively when provided with appropriate tasks and guidance, although some lack confidence in the quality of their work. In some of the best lessons, it was very evident that students really enjoyed what they were doing. Students' levels of concentration are at least good and they stick to the tasks they are given and usually push themselves to do their best.

The attainment of students on entry is usually well below average, although improving rapidly since the academy opened. The impressive 2009 GCSE examination outcomes included science and information and communication technology results which were well above the national average. The proportion of students gaining A* and A grades is improving but still below national averages. The proportion of students obtaining five higher GCSE grades including English and mathematics in 2009 was below average. Current attainment in English and mathematics is broadly satisfactory and shows a clear trend of improvement. Although students make outstanding progress, the literacy and numeracy skills they currently acquire impact on their opportunities for further education, training or employment when they enter the sixth form or leave the

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academy. The attainment of boys is rising. Examination results for minority ethnic students are generally stronger than for their White British peers, but varied with those from an Indian background achieving significantly above average. Vulnerable students are increasingly successful and most of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities exceed their targets. The results secured in the academy's sports and arts specialism are in line with the challenging targets set by governors.

The overwhelming majority of students feel safe when they are attending the academy. Attendance has improved but a few students, mainly White British, continue to jeopardise their education by not attending as regularly as they should.

Students of all backgrounds readily take on responsibility, for example ambassadors, prefects and sports captains, and are very proud of their school. Many students get involved in the local community, notably in the production and presentation of music, drama and dance shows. On the second day of the inspection, groups of dancers, Dhol and Tabla musicians joined the 10-year anniversary celebrations of Greet Green Community Association. The school also hosts a range of local community groups, for example the 'golden oldies'.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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How effective is the provision?

Teaching has improved since inspectors monitored the academy in February 2009. During lesson observations, it was very obvious that all teachers were using a range of strategies to try and accelerate the rate of progress students make. The most effective teaching strategies seen by inspectors were:

- clear explanations of what students had to learn by the end of the lesson matched to curriculum levels
- teachers' questioning, which led them to understand how much students knew and then, when necessary, adjust their teaching to ensure work continued to be appropriately challenging
- more than one level of work in a lesson so that work was matched to students' different abilities
- students taught how to evaluate their own work against clear criteria.

The senior leaders agreed with inspectors that more work could be done on developing teachers' marking so that it is more helpful for students. Inspectors saw some very good examples of marking where teachers clearly explained what students had achieved and what they needed to focus on next, but this is not yet the norm.

The curriculum provision is outstanding because of the clear impact on students' achievement. There is an intelligently crafted balance of courses which captures the interest and enthusiasm of students. There is an extensive range of 'twilight' support and revision lessons available, and an outstanding mixture of Saturday and holiday provision by staff dedicated to ensuring equality of opportunity.

Students say that staff are always there for them and are invariably willing to give up time whenever they need any help - often going the 'extra mile'. Typical of the outstanding care and guidance is the work of the centre of inclusion and alternative curriculum base, which helps students who, for a while, need help to improve their behaviour, confidence or attitudes to learning. The school has a high level of commitment, and effective links with a wide range of external agencies provide appropriate specialist support for students. Inspectors saw how staff, who knew the students as individuals, sensitively encouraged or cajoled them to keep on trying. Attendance has improved as a result of effective strategies, but there is still more work to be done to find ways to ensure regular attendance by every student.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

Typical of the leaders' ability to drive improvement is the innovative and determined work done to improve the quality of teaching. The following are a few of the actions taken to improve teaching.

Senior leaders shared their expectations with staff that teaching had to improve and organised training that focused on the features of good and outstanding practice

Senior leaders increased their own roles in monitoring teaching and students' work and generally spent more time in lessons.

Heads of departments monitored teaching alongside senior leaders or external advisers to develop a range of leadership skills.

Small groups of staff known as the teaching and learning 'pods' were charged with developing and promoting good practice. The 'pod' members have supported colleagues through training, joint planning, peer observation and feedback.

Good teaching was videoed and used to share good practice.

Leaders listened to what students were saying about lessons.

As a result of the work done to improve teaching, there is a rigorous focus on improving the quality of questioning in lessons and ensuring that work is matched to students' abilities. Improvement has been very effectively implemented, although there is still work to do to ensure that these strategies make the quality of teaching at least good in all lessons. There are many other examples of how the academy demonstrates outstanding capacity to improve further, for example the exciting work in progress to develop provision for the many gifted and talented students.

The academy's work to promote equality is best seen in the way it has improved the attainment of students eligible for free school meals which, when taking into account a range of subject results, is above the national average for all students.

Safeguarding procedures are very effective, reflecting the academy's caring and supportive ethos. Work to promote students' understanding and respect for different cultures, religions and backgrounds is good and as a result the academy is a harmonious community. Students are given many opportunities to engage with local community groups and communities in a global context, for example, the links made with the Al-Zainab school in the Yemen as part of the work to achieve the International Schools Award.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Students' achievement is good. The vast majority of students complete their courses and pass their examinations. They behave very well, have good social and interpersonal skills and are particularly supportive of their peers. They contribute positively to the life of the academy through their extensive participation in a wide variety of activities beyond the classroom, for example, in assisting with fund raising and community-focussed events.

The quality of teaching is good and, sometimes, outstanding - as observed in science and drama lessons. The academy offers a good range of vocational and academic provision, including intermediate-level courses for those who are not ready to progress to AS-level studies when they enter Year 12. A wide range of courses is available through partner institutions to supplement the very well organised on-site provision.

Outstanding leadership of the sixth form has driven forward the development of effective provision on the George Salter site. Quality checks have begun on courses provided through partner institutions. Achievement has improved, at least in part, from the meticulous tracking of students' progress, and the quality of individual support provided. The care, welfare and guidance of students are outstanding, and many individuals provided personal accounts of the dedicated support they receive.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were very positive about

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the academy and said that their children enjoy attending it and are kept safe. The overwhelming majority said that the academy informs them of their child's progress. Inspectors support this view and judge the partnership between parents and carers and the academy as outstanding. Almost all parents and carers said that teaching is good and inspectors agree.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at George Salter Collegiate Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 236 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1072 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	98	42	125	53	9	4	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	101	44	126	53	4	2	3	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	119	50	110	47	7	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	95	40	129	55	10	4	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	106	45	122	52	6	3	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	100	42	117	50	16	7	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	25	152	64	19	8	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	97	41	113	48	13	6	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	83	35	136	58	10	4	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	94	40	109	46	18	8	9	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	73	31	127	54	21	9	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	112	47	111	47	8	3	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	130	55	96	41	6	3	1	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



29 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of George Salter Collegiate Academy, West Midlands, B70 9UW

Inspectors judged your academy to be outstanding. You told us how proud you are to belong to it and we understand why.

Here are some of the reasons for your academy being judged outstanding.

The progress you make from Year 7 through to Year 11 is outstanding.

In 2009, 96% of students gained 5 GCSE A* to C grades, which was well above the national average.

Your attainment in English and mathematics is improving.

Your behaviour is excellent.

The impressive care and support from staff help you to learn and develop your personal skills.

The lessons and courses you can choose are really helping you to learn.

The quality of teaching is good.

Your parents and carers are encouraged to support you at home with your work and be involved in the important decisions about your education.

The sixth form is rapidly improving and students are well prepared to choose what to do when they leave the academy, for example, the option to go to university as more are doing.

You told us that the principal and senior staff do a good job. Inspectors fully agree, and thought their work was outstanding.

Even in outstanding academies there are things that could be better. Inspectors recommend the following as areas to improve:

- your attainment in English and mathematics, because achieving in these two subjects will give you better chances in life
- how well teachers mark your work, so that you understand what you have achieved and what you need to do to improve
- your attendance, especially that of the few of you that miss school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Cook

Her Majesty's Inspector

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