

Heanor Gate Science College

Kirkley Drive, Heanor, Derbyshire DE75 7RA

Inspection dates

15–16 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal provides determined leadership. He has raised expectations across the school and brought about significant improvement in a short period of time.
- Leaders and governors know their school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The school's plans for improvements tackle the right priorities. As a result, previously low examination results in English have been rectified.
- Many of the senior and middle leaders at the school have taken up their roles in the past year. They have supported the principal well in bringing about rapid change.
- The quality of teaching has improved markedly. This is the result of some new appointments, high-quality professional development and decisive action taken to eradicate weaker practice.
- Pupils' progress has improved and is now good across a range of subjects. Previously underachieving groups, such as higher-ability disadvantaged pupils and boys, are now rapidly catching up with others.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and during the less structured times of the school day. They are polite, courteous and respectful and were frequently seen to be holding doors open for each other and adults.
- Pupils' attendance is good overall. Leaders' efforts to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils are beginning to show improvements.
- The sixth form is good. Leaders have taken robust action to challenge underachieving departments.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make consistently strong progress in all subjects by ensuring that all teachers:
 - plan and implement activities that are well matched to pupils' needs
 - have high expectations of the quality and quantity of work that boys complete
 - consistently challenge the most able pupils, including those in the sixth form.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that remaining differences in attendance between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is reduced further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The newly appointed principal has very high expectations for everyone in the school and he has brought a renewed drive to ensuring that this highly ambitious vision is communicated to all staff and pupils. Since his arrival, there has been a cultural change with the focus now on securing high-quality teaching for all groups of pupils in the school.
- Although the trust has been slow to make the necessary changes, new leaders at all levels are now in place, including the chair of the governors. They are collectively driving improvements in the quality of teaching which is leading to significantly improved outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders are working hard to improve the quality of teaching through the use of high-quality professional development for staff. This commitment was clear during meetings with staff and in nearly all lesson observations. The school's partnership work with its sponsor school has been important in improving teaching. In English, for example, the trust's English specialist leader has worked with leaders in the school to significantly improve the quality of teaching in this subject area. As a result of this, pupils are now making good progress in English.
- Governors and leaders have put in place a robust and comprehensive system to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. A wide range of evidence is used, leading to a holistic view of the quality of teaching that is validated by partners, including some external to the trust.
- Leaders manage teachers' performance rigorously. School leaders use the information they gather on the quality of teaching to help them to decide on teachers' salary progression. The school's leaders are still working to achieve complete consistency in the quality of teaching. When leaders have concerns about standards being achieved by individual subjects or teachers, they provide high-quality support and challenge.
- Governors and leaders have reviewed the curriculum so that it better meets the needs and aspirations of all pupils. This has helped to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have not fully evaluated the additional funding the school receives carefully enough. However, governors are now much more aware of the impact of this funding on the progress pupils are making. Pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up money is now used effectively to boost pupils' self-confidence and they are making increasingly strong progress. For example, in Year 8, disadvantaged pupils are making better progress in English than their non-disadvantaged peers.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. The school's ethos provides a clear moral framework and underpins the school's approach to developing pupils' personal skills and an understanding of the wider society. The well-planned citizenship and preparation for life programmes cover a wide range of relevant topics from relationships and health to careers education, democracy and British values. The school makes use of other organisations to support the programme. For example, two local charities work with pupils on topics such as domestic violence

and developing healthy relationships. Pupils have benefitted from visits from various faith groups, including the imam from the local multi-faith centre to dispel stereotypical images of the Muslim community.

- Some information on the school's website does not reflect its good work, particularly in relation to its use of targeted funding, such as the Year 7 catch-up funding. Some of the information that academies are required to publish is missing. The school is quickly addressing any omissions.

Governance of the school

- Leaders and governors have an accurate, full understanding of the quality of education at the school. Their self-evaluation is accurate and, consequently, the plans for improvement are appropriate. Greater detail in these plans, clearly identifying who is responsible for particular actions and clear milestones, would enable governors to monitor progress even more frequently and robustly.
- Since the previous inspection, the trust has provided the support and challenge needed to improve the quality of leadership in the school although this has taken longer than it should. Consequently, outcomes for some pupils have remained too low for too long. However, this has now been rectified and all pupils and groups of pupils throughout the school are making good progress.
- Governors use regular visits to the school to see for themselves how well the school is working. They no longer rely on receiving their information just from senior leaders. This is helping them to make better informed decisions, for example in the reorganisation of the curriculum to better meet the needs of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors and leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are appropriate and fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of a high quality.
- Staff are aware of all aspects of safeguarding as a result of regular and effective training. The school keeps thorough records of the training of staff. All know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Governors keep their knowledge about safeguarding up to date and all are appropriately trained. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding procedures take account of the latest guidance issued. Employment checks that are required are carried out before staff appointments are confirmed.
- The school is a safe place. The overwhelming majority of parents believe that the school keeps their children safe and cares for them well. Pupils state that there are few concerns about behaviour or bullying. Their views are supported by the low number of serious behaviour incidents that are recorded. When they do occur, they are dealt with quickly by staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved and is now good. Most teachers use their subject expertise and detailed knowledge of what pupils already understand, know and can do, to plan lessons. All teachers are now well informed about individual pupils' starting points and most are using this information to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' ability. However, sometimes teachers do not match the learning activities to the needs of individual pupils and groups of pupils. When this is the case, disadvantaged pupils, the most able and boys do not make rapid progress.
- Relationships are strong. Teachers know their pupils and, in turn, pupils trust their teachers. Pupils support each other in lessons and they are keen and eager to do well. Teachers usually have high expectations. However, sometimes teachers are too accepting of pupils, especially boys, who complete too little work, or work of a poor quality.
- In most lessons, teachers skilfully use questioning to help students think about their learning and to deepen their understanding. They expect pupils to answer questions with detail and precision. For example, in a Year 7 mathematics lesson, pupils were able to work with numbers in different bases because the teacher asked questions that enabled them to think and draw conclusions about this challenging topic.
- In some lessons, the work is insufficiently challenging to enable the most able pupils to make rapid progress. For example, in a Year 7 humanities lesson when pupils were not able to develop their higher-level thinking about visiting new places because the teacher had not provided sufficiently challenging activities.
- Pupils collaborate effectively in groups. They listen respectfully to each other, and they share ideas and support each other. For example, inspectors observed groups of pupils supporting and challenging each other well in a Year 11 English lesson where they were learning about character analysis.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is mostly strong and they use this to explain the task and clarify new or difficult concepts. For example, in a Year 11 science lesson, pupils were able to revise difficult scientific concepts because the teacher explained them very effectively. When subject knowledge is less strong, particularly with some non-specialist teachers, pupils make slower progress. Inspectors observed this in a small minority of English and mathematics lessons. However, senior leaders' knowledge of teaching across the school means that they are aware of these weaknesses and are taking quick and effective action to support improvement.
- Teachers use additional adults effectively in supporting pupils who require extra help. Teaching assistants are clear about their roles and know the pupils well. As a result, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving. For example, in a Year 7 mathematics lesson, other adults were skilfully working with the teacher to provide effective support for pupils that helped to build their confidence in finding equivalent fractions.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are very well mannered and overwhelmingly keen to do well. They are smartly dressed and proud of their school. The great majority of pupils were keen to tell inspectors about the school's many strengths, including the wide range of opportunities that it provides for pupils.
- Pupils are given strong messages about different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Pupils say bullying is rare but they know who to approach if it does happen. The overwhelming majority believe that the school deals with it quickly and effectively.
- Almost all parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire confirmed that their child is well looked after by the school. One parent said: 'I feel my child is in a very good, safe and caring learning environment where he is thriving.'
- Staff cater well for pupils' physical and emotional well-being. Most parents are very positive and appreciative about the care that their children receive while at school. Several pupils who spoke with inspectors recognised that leaders and teachers care for them well. For some Year 11 pupils, this level of care has helped them to decide to join the sixth form next year.
- All pupils say that they feel safe at school and their parents agree with this. The school has ensured that pupils are well informed about the dangers of sexual exploitation and online grooming.
- A very small number of pupils are educated at an alternative provision for part of the school week. Their social and emotional needs are met well.
- Pupils are provided with independent careers advice which leads to positive next steps in their education or employment for almost all of them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave very well in almost all lessons, at break and lunchtime and as they move around the school. Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous to each other and to adults. Pupils, staff and most parents agree that behaviour in the school is good and well managed.
- There is very little disruption in lessons because the school is very clear about behavioural expectations. Pupils said that when disruption does occur, it is only in a few lessons that have younger pupils in them and it is dealt with quickly and effectively by teachers.
- The majority of parents, pupils and staff who responded to surveys during the inspection believe that the school makes sure that its pupils are well behaved.
- Most pupils value their education and enjoy coming to school. The rate of attendance is in line with the national average. However, a small minority of disadvantaged pupils

are persistently absent. Efforts to help these pupils with their personal circumstances have had some success and the rate of attendance is getting closer to that of their peers in the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils currently in the school are making good progress as a result of good teaching.
- Outcomes for pupils in 2016 did show some improvement from the previous year, particularly in English and mathematics where attainment had improved to be just above the national average. However, overall progress was below the national average, largely due to relatively less strong progress in English and a curriculum that was not well matched to the needs of all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils.
- During the inspection, the school provided compelling evidence to demonstrate that pupils across the school are making greater progress and that this is leading to higher outcomes, as demonstrated through regular mock examinations for pupils in Year 11, for example. This performance information matched well with the evidence inspectors gathered from their observations in lessons and through looking in detail at pupils' work over time.
- Pupils currently in the school are benefiting from stronger teaching than was the case previously. Their progress in most year groups and in most subjects is now faster than last year. This better progress is particularly evident in the pupils' written work. Increasing proportions of pupils are working at the standards expected for their ages. However, in modern foreign languages, the progress of younger pupils is less strong.
- Assessment information and a scrutiny of pupils' workbooks indicates that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making more rapid progress now than at the time of the previous inspection. However, leaders are aware of the need to ensure that a greater proportion of the most able pupils make the progress they are capable of achieving.
- The progress made by current disadvantaged pupils mirrors that made by non-disadvantaged pupils. They are now making good progress because teachers use assessment information increasingly well to provide work at just the right level of challenge. Similarly, the most able disadvantaged pupils are making better progress currently because of the improved quality of teaching throughout the school. However, leaders need to ensure that they make consistently strong progress in all subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make increasingly good progress because teachers are planning better to meet their needs and these pupils access bespoke intervention activities in a timely manner.
- Pupils who enter Year 7 having attained below-average standards in both English and mathematics are given extra support to catch up. Many of these pupils successfully catch up with their peers by the end of Year 7.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The recently appointed head of the sixth form is ambitious to see the sixth form continue to improve. A greater proportion of Year 11 pupils are applying to stay on in the sixth form. An inclusive entry policy sees students joining the sixth form with a wide range of attainment.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. This is because challenging targets are set for students and there is an effective system of monitoring, ensuring that students make good progress. In 2016, achievements were at least in line with national averages for most subjects.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good. Across a range of subjects, students engage in mature debate and discussion to tackle challenging issues. For example, in a Year 12 citizenship lesson when students were articulating their thoughts about human rights in a sensitive and mature way. Where there has been less effective teaching, leaders have taken steps that have led to improvements. Teachers make use of questioning frequently in lessons, although the use of extended questioning to challenge the most able students is not yet used consistently.
- Attendance, punctuality, behaviour and attitudes to learning are good in the sixth form. Students enjoy their studies and apply themselves to their work. There is an enhancement programme that all students take part in on a weekly basis which includes coaching awards, information technology development and cooking for survival.
- All students who join the sixth form without having secured GCSEs in English and mathematics at grades A* to C are expected to study towards improving their grade. Current Year 13 students have been successful in this, with all of them reaching the A* to C benchmark in English and half of them have been successful in mathematics.
- A broad range of academic and vocational options is offered in the sixth form. Students are able to study academic or vocational courses or a mixture of these. Recently, the curriculum has been extended by introducing a level 2 hair and beauty course. Leaders have plans to allow students to progress to level 3 in this course next year.
- Effective careers advice and guidance ensures that students take subjects that are well matched to their ability and aspirations. High-quality support means that most complete the courses they start in Year 12. Effective guidance in Years 12 and 13 prepares students well for when they leave school. Consequently, the proportions of students who move on to university, apprenticeship or employment are close to the national figures. Around three quarters of current Year 13 students who applied to university have at least one offer of a place at a Russell Group university.
- Students are proud of their school and they say that they enjoy the community feel. They feel safe, and are safe, in the sixth form. They know how to live safe and healthy lifestyles because they understand the risks they might otherwise face and how to deal with them.
- All requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes are met.

School details

Unique reference number	137606
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10019567

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1259
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	152
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair of the trust	Andrew Talbot
Principal	Stephen Huntington
Telephone number	01773 716396
Website	www.heanorgate.org.uk
Email address	info@heanorgate.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 November 2014

Information about this school

- This is an above-average-sized secondary academy school.
- The school is part of the Spencer Academies Trust.
- The school receives support from George Spencer Academy and this has supported a wide range of developments in teaching, learning, pupils' progress and the use of resources.
- The majority of pupils are White British heritage. The school has below the national average number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- There is an above average proportion of girls in the school.
- A small number of pupils attend the Genesis Academy and Real Education for part of their education.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2014 and 2015, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 4.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium funding information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about: details on courses for all year groups; how parents or members of the public can find out more about the school's curriculum; accessibility planning for disabled pupils, and equalities objectives.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 48 lessons, twelve of which were seen jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors made short visits to tutor time.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at break, lunchtime and as pupils moved around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised, in detail, a range of pupils' books in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings with the principal, senior and middle leaders, the chair of the governing body and other governors and trustees of the Spencer Academies Trust, the current school sponsor.
- Inspectors spoke with a wide range of pupils from all year groups in meetings, in lessons and around the school at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of the school's documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school action plan, data on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding procedures, evaluations of the quality of teaching and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 169 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire, 108 responses to the online staff questionnaires and 70 responses to the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Ian Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Annabel Bolt	Ofsted Inspector
Nigel Boyd	Ofsted Inspector

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