

Samworth Church Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135583
Local Authority	N/A
Inspection number	364396
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Tim Bristow HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Foundation
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	835
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Linney
Headteacher	Michael Griffiths (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
School address	Sherwood Hall Road Mansfield NG18 2DY
Telephone number	01623 663450
Fax number	01623 450026
Email address	enquiries@tscacademy.org.uk

Age group	11–19
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 42 teachers and visited 44 lessons. They held meetings with members of the governing body, a representative from the Young Persons Learning Agency, staff, groups of students and parents and carers. They observed the academy's work, and looked at the academy development plan, assessment information, lesson plans, academy policies and responses to questionnaires from 292 parents and carers, 150 pupils and 116 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Has the progress of all groups of pupils and their attainment improved sufficiently this year to justify a higher grade for achievement than satisfactory?
- Has the proportion of teaching that is good increased sufficiently and consistently across schools in the academy to justify the academy judgement of good?
- Is the leadership at all levels and its impact effective enough to judge capacity for improvement to be better than satisfactory?
- Have leaders overcome the weaknesses in outcomes and provision in the sixth form identified at the monitoring inspection in May 2010?

Information about the school

The academy is a below average-sized secondary school. The proportions of students from minority ethnic groups and pupils who speak English as an additional language are well below average. A quarter of the students are known to be eligible for free school meals; this is a higher proportion than average.

The academy opened in September 2008 replacing its predecessor school. It moved into its new buildings in July 2010. The academy is led by a principal and is divided into five schools each led by a head of school. The schools are supported by an achievement department. Sponsorship of the academy is shared between Sir David Samworth and the Diocese of Southwell. A monitoring inspection of the academy took place in May 2010. The academy has specialist status for business and enterprise.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Since the academy opened, the very effective leadership from the principal and senior leadership team has resulted in much improved provision and outcomes for students. While overall the academy is satisfactory, there are good features.

Achievement is satisfactory. Attainment has risen since the academy opened and is now average. While students overall make satisfactory progress it is accelerating and for some groups, such as those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, it is good. Achievement in mathematics has improved strongly as a result of strengthened provision and leadership. In English, weaker provision and leadership in the past have resulted in improvements to achievement being slower than in other subjects. Recently, leadership and provision have been strengthened and the academy has plans for future improvement. However, at the time of the inspection these have not had sufficient time to have an impact.

The behaviour of students is good. The students spoken to report how pleased they are about the improvements to behaviour since the academy opened. The very large majority of students report that they feel safe in the academy. For example, students report that there are now few incidents of bullying, and when it occurs they are satisfied that it will be dealt with effectively. This is as a result of the good quality of the care, guidance and support led by the achievement department. Another success of this department is the improvement in attendance which is now average. National statistics show that two years ago attendance was extremely low.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are respectful to each other and the adults in school. They demonstrate that they are polite and proud to attend the academy. One impact of this is that the excellent buildings and grounds have been maintained in pristine condition as students take great responsibility to care for their surroundings. One student described the academy as 'majestic'.

The good curriculum provides students with a broad range of enrichment opportunities, particularly those offered through the business and enterprise specialism. For example, the Digby, Lord Jones Challenge, in which teams of students compete to design business solutions and then to market them. The good range of opportunities offered by the curriculum enable students to demonstrate a good contribution to the community both within and outside the academy. The students' development of a healthy lifestyle is good. The wide range of sporting

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activities of a high quality and the nutritious and tasty meals both at breakfast and lunch times has been effective in encouraging students to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Teaching is satisfactory. While the proportion of lessons that are good is growing, there are still some inconsistencies. In lessons that are satisfactory rather than better, assessment information is not used as well as it could be to pitch work at the correct level for all students. A few, such as the more-able are insufficiently challenged, while others occasionally find the work too hard. Marking is not as helpful as it could be in some subjects. It does not give sufficient advice to students on the next steps they could take to improve their work.

Nearly all aspects of leadership and governance are good. School information and external evaluations of progress, such as the monitoring inspection in 2010 show that the new procedures to check and improve the quality of the academy's work have been successful. For example, leaders have eradicated the inadequate teaching and learning that used to be a feature of the academy in its early days and greatly reduced the proportion of satisfactory lessons through the regular reviews of teaching and learning. The impressive track record of improvement to date and its rigorous identification of what needs to be done demonstrate that the academy has good capacity for future improvement. Leaders have rightly identified that to continue this improvement in teaching and learning there now needs to be a sharper focus on reducing the proportion of satisfactory lessons still further. All middle leaders demonstrate an enthusiasm for their roles, but some are inexperienced and not yet as fully effective as they could be.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement to good throughout the whole academy by:
 - using assessment information better in the satisfactory lessons to pitch work accurately to meet the needs of all students
 - strengthening the marking so that students get better advice and guidance on how to improve their work
 - ensuring that all middle leaders are well equipped to drive forward improvements to teaching and learning
 - sharply focusing the procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning on further reducing the proportion of satisfactory lessons.
- Ensure that the recently formed plans to improve English provision and outcomes are fully implemented.

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Each year students’ attainment on entry to the academy varies between broadly average to below average. The majority of students then make satisfactory progress and a minority make good progress. Academy assessment information and English and mathematics GCSE results for the current Year 11, taken in November 2010, show that attainment is average. Assessment information for other years shows that attainment is in line with national expectations. Nearly all groups of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making good progress. For example, those who experience behavioural difficulties are well supported to make good progress because of the additional activities and close attention of adults in the achievement department. Students that are known to be eligible for free school meals are also making good progress.

In the satisfactory lessons some pupils do not make the progress they could because they are not sufficiently challenged by their work. For example, in one lesson, pupils who had successfully finished their work early, demonstrating that they understood what to do, were given more work of the same standard to keep them occupied while others in the class caught up. In lessons, even in the majority that are satisfactory, students engage well with their learning. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson more-able students were working very hard to understand and solve algebra problems.

Students have a good attitude to their own and others safety and demonstrate that they take the necessary steps to stay safe. For example, students spoke knowledgeably about the dangers of the internet and the importance of e safety.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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?

Teachers have used assessment information effectively to identify the differing abilities of students and have been generally successful at matching provision to meet their needs. For example, in English and mathematics lessons, students are taught in classes based on their ability. Often, in the satisfactory lessons where students are classed by ability, they all do the same task. Sometimes the most and least able in these lessons do not always make the progress they could because teachers have paid insufficient attention to the smaller difference in abilities when planning the work. In lessons that are good or better, teachers enable students to demonstrate their independence and creativity because assessment information is used effectively to provide all groups of pupils with work that is interesting and challenging. For example, in an outstanding art lesson, where students were designing vases, they relished the challenge of meeting the high standards set by the teacher for creativity and quality of product. Students are aware of their targets and the grades they are trying to achieve in exams. In some subjects the marking does not give them sufficient advice on how to improve their work to achieve these targets.

The academy offers students curriculum pathways that are well tailored to meet their needs. They can choose from a good range of academic and vocational subjects. Business courses that are offered to students in all years are popular and the enterprise opportunities that are available in a range of subjects and extra-curricular activities are a strength of the curriculum. These are well organised and coordinated by a comprehensive enterprise tracker and action plan. There are still weaker areas of the curriculum that have been identified for improvement by leaders. A few parents and carers are rightly disappointed by the limited opportunities for students in the music curriculum.

Students now thrive in the safe, secure and exciting learning environment established by the academy. The school system ensures that students' individual pastoral needs are met very swiftly and effectively. Procedures to safeguard and care for students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are excellent. For example, the breakfast club, that is free to all, is particularly successful in giving those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable a good start to the day; as a result, they are well prepared to learn. Academy information shows that the exclusion rate in the past was very high. Much improved procedures to manage behaviour have reduced the exclusion rate considerably. However, a very high expectation of behaviour means exclusions still remain above average.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The aims and success criteria within the academy development plan are well focused on the necessary priorities for improvement. Senior leaders have been relentless in pursuing these aims. One particularly strong feature of their leadership is that they have established robust procedures that hold staff to account for their work. This has ensured that students benefit from the same quality of education and high quality care, guidance and support regardless of which school they belong to. The regular reviews to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning of all staff and to implement improvements have been successful in ensuring that the quality of learning in lessons is very rarely less than satisfactory and is now increasingly good. However, having the same procedures to review all staff regardless of whether their lessons are judged outstanding or satisfactory has resulted in slower improvement of the skills of a few whose lessons usually demonstrate satisfactory teaching and learning.

Governance is good. The members of the governing body are very knowledgeable about the academy and effectively hold leaders to account for their work. They demonstrate a real passion to improve the education for the students in this community. Regular visits are made to school by governors to check its work. For example, they are rigorous in checking that the academy fulfils its statutory responsibilities with regard to safeguarding. Checks made by governors to examine aspects of education, such as the quality of teaching and learning, are less regular.

Leaders have very effective procedures in place to tackle discrimination both for staff and students. For example, the core values courses held each term reinforce the importance of tackling discrimination. The improvement to all aspects of provision has resulted in the acceleration in progress that has eliminated the gap for all groups between their attainment and national expectations. Consequently equality of opportunity is good. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and policies comprehensive. For example, the checks made to establish whether staff are safe to work with students are very thorough.

The academy has promoted community cohesion well. The curriculum has a good range of opportunities for students to gain an understanding of contrasting communities within Great Britain and abroad. For example, a group of students raised money to visit Tanzania to begin interschool links as part of the Mango Tree Charity work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and	2
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Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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driving improvement	
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
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
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	3

Sixth form

A rigorous review of the sixth form in 2010 by academy leaders has resulted in a strengthening of provision and outcomes for students. The sixth form now offers students a satisfactory standard of education. National assessment information shows that from low starting points in Year 12 students now make satisfactory or good progress with their courses. Exam results, particularly at A level, are average. In the past, results at AS level have been low. This is as a result of students that were guided to inappropriate courses which led to a high drop out rate. The academy has successfully reversed this trend. Students now benefit from much better advice about the courses they should enrol on and about the progress they are making. Consequently, the retention rate is much improved. One remaining weakness is that formal arrangements for parents and carers to meet teachers in Year 12 to discuss progress are held too late in the academic year when students are more than half way through their courses. The academy specialism has been highly successful in encouraging the majority of students to pursue the opportunity to develop their leadership skills. For example, by running the school councils and academy parliament, attending staff meetings and briefings, managing guests and visitors, appointing staff and attending leadership conferences and exchanges with other schools. Sixth form leaders have successfully laid firm foundations so that they are well placed to continue improvements to provision and outcomes. Good plans for further improvement are being implemented.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3

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The quality of provision in the sixth form Leadership and management of the sixth form	3
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Views of parents and carers

In responding to the questionnaire, the very large majority of parents and carers supported the work of the academy. For example, most parents and carers agree that they are happy with their child’s experience at the academy. While there were a number of positive comments praising the work of the academy, there were also comments raising concerns about aspects of its work. There was no apparent trend to most of these concerns. However, very small groups of parents and carers were concerned about the quality of communication, particularly about their children’s progress in Year 7 and Year 12, and a few were concerned that the use of exclusion as a punishment was occasionally inappropriate. These issues were pointed out to the principal and governing body who have agreed to investigate them further.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Samworth Church 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 292 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 835 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	104	36	168	58	12	4	5	2
The school keeps my child safe	131	45	148	51	11	4	1	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	161	55	121	41	8	3	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	121	41	146	50	18	6	4	1
The teaching is good at this school	110	38	162	55	14	5	3	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	89	30	168	58	23	8	4	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	92	32	178	61	15	5	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)	115	39	144	49	14	5	4	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	101	35	170	58	16	5	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	124	42	127	43	30	10%	8	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	81	28	166	57	23	8	7	2
The school is led and managed effectively	121	41	153	52	9	3	5	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	142	49	130	45	11	4	5	2

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



20 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Samworth Church Academy Mansfield NG18 2DY

I would like to thank you for the warm reception that the inspection team received from you when we inspected your academy. We found your views about the work of the academy to be fair and honest. They were particularly helpful to us as we made our judgements of the academy's effectiveness. We think that the very large majority of you work hard and that the standard of your work is rising. Not only is your academic achievement improving, but you are developing into sensible, responsible citizens who enthusiastically take the opportunities available to pursue a wide variety of interests within lessons and more widely within the academy.

Nearly all of you that we spoke to reported that the academy, with its new buildings and facilities, has made a very big difference to the quality of your education. The curriculum is good: you now have a much greater choice of courses to pursue and you are well cared for. We think that the overall effectiveness of the academy is satisfactory, and because it is so well led by the principal and other senior leaders it is improving rapidly.

In order to make further improvements we have asked the academy to:

- improve your achievement by ensuring that you all receive work that is well suited to you, improving the quality of marking in some of your books and by ensuring that school leaders continue the drive to make all satisfactory teaching good
- make sure that recent changes to the English department result in real improvements in your achievement.

By continuing to act responsibly and contribute to the community and also exploiting the opportunities available to improve personally and academically you will add to the success of the work of the academy.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector

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