

The Elizabeth Woodville School

Stratford Road, Deanshanger, Milton Keynes, MK19 6HN

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- In 2013, the proportion of students who achieved five or more GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, was above average.
- Almost all groups of students make good progress across year groups, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and the most-able students.
- Teaching is good. Most teachers plan work which interests students and motivates them to do their best.
- Many teachers ask probing questions which help students to think hard.
- Behaviour is good and the vast majority of students show positive attitudes to learning.
- Bullying is rare and students feel safe at school. They understand safety related issues.
- The sixth-form curriculum has been suitably revised to meet the requirements of the 16-19 Study Programme.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, they have successfully made sure that teaching, achievement, and behaviour and safety are good. The leadership of the sixth form is good because achievement and teaching are improving strongly.
- The governing body provides a good level of support and challenge to the academy. Governors know the academy well and have successfully influenced the good achievement of students.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The sixth form requires improvement. Students do not all make good progress because the work is not always hard enough and some students do not attend regularly.
- Boys and girls both achieve well, but boys did not do as well as girls when compared with national averages in 2013.
- Sometimes, marking is not as helpful as it should be.
- The academy's improvement plan is not detailed enough, nor are the targets which are set to help teachers improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 46 lessons, seven of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. The inspection team also made several short visits to other lessons to check on the progress and behaviour of different groups of students.
- Meetings were held with six groups of students from all year groups. Other meetings were held with members of the governing body (the academy council) and with senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects. The lead inspector held a meeting with a representative of the academy group to which The Elizabeth Woodville School belongs.
- Inspectors analysed the 101 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also analysed a questionnaire that the academy uses to seek the views of parents and carers.
- Inspectors observed the work of the academy and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the college’s improvement plan and data on students’ progress.
- It was not possible for inspectors to observe teaching in many AS courses in Year 12 as students were following a revised timetable to accommodate revision sessions and examinations.

Inspection team

Richard Sutton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Beverley Johnston	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Macfarlane	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector
Thomas Walton	Additional Inspector
Neil Stanley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages is well below average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium, which is additional funding given to schools for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy works in partnership with three training companies, Swan CIC Training Partnership, Minnet Construction and Centurion Training to provide education off the school site. A small number of students in Key Stage 4 study a range of work-related courses with these training providers for part of the week.
- The Elizabeth Woodville School converted to become an academy in December 2012. Its predecessor school, which was also called The Elizabeth Woodville School, was not previously inspected by Ofsted; it was created in August 2011 through an amalgamation of Kingsbrook School and Roade Sports College.
- The academy is part of an academy group called The Learning Schools Trust. Some staff from the academy provide leadership support to other academies in the group.
- The academy is on two campuses approximately eight miles apart. Students in Years 7 to 11 remain on the same site all week, but some sixth-form students travel between the sites.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in the main academy (Years 7 to 11) so that more is outstanding by:
 - providing more opportunities for boys to develop their writing skills in all subjects
 - making sure marking always gives students guidance on how they can improve their work and regularly checking that teachers' advice given has been acted upon.
- Improve teaching in the sixth form so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - work is not too easy or too hard
 - students attend regularly
 - teaching is consistently good across all subjects so that students make equally secure progress in each.
- Improve the impact that leaders have on teaching and achievement, particularly in the sixth form, by making sure that:
 - the academy improvement plan and sixth-form plan contain clear and specific targets, so that any weaknesses can be tackled quickly, and indicate what is to be achieved at various points throughout the year, so that any lack of progress can be remedied
 - the targets which are set to help teachers improve their work are sufficiently detailed.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students in Year 11, who were the first year group in the academy to sit examinations in 2013, achieved well. The proportion of students who achieved five or more GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, was above average.
- In 2013, the proportion of students in Year 11 who made the progress expected of them in English was well above average. In mathematics it was a little above average. The proportion of students who made more-rapid progress than expected was also well above average in English and above average in mathematics.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress because teachers use the information about these students' attainment to pitch work at the right level. The progress of students supported through school action plus was not as good as it should have been in 2013; these students are now making good progress because leaders have accurately identified why they underachieved and quickly put in place the necessary improvements.
- The most-able students make good progress because teachers plan work which is appropriately challenging. The small proportion of students who speak English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds also make good progress in most subjects.
- The progress of students who are supported by the pupil premium is good and students of all abilities and ages who are eligible for support are catching up with other students well. The academy spends the additional funding to provide extra staff to give students one-to-one support, for example. In 2013, students in Year 11 supported through the pupil premium achieved, on average, two-thirds of a grade lower in English and almost a grade lower in mathematics than other students in the academy.
- The academy entered some students early for GCSE English and mathematics. This has not been an effective strategy as it has not always helped the most-able students to achieve the high grades that they are capable of reaching.
- A small number of students are supported through additional Year 7 'catch-up' funding, which helps those who join the academy with attainment below the expected levels in English and mathematics. The academy uses this funding effectively to provide these students with additional support for reading and mathematics. The majority of these students are very quickly catching up.
- The small number of students who study work-related courses with training providers make good progress.
- Although boys make good progress, it is not always as fast as that made by girls. However, this gap is narrowing in most year groups. In 2013, there was a big difference in boys' attainment in Year 11 compared with that of girls.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. Many students underachieved significantly in 2013 because they were following courses that were not well matched to their interests and skills and they were not taught well enough. However, achievement is improving strongly because teaching in the sixth form is improving. Students are making much better progress, though it is not consistent across subjects and some students do not attend regularly enough.

The quality of teaching is good

- Students benefit from teaching in the main academy which is good across subjects and in each year group. This is the main reason why achievement is good.
- Most teachers use the information that they have about students' attainment skilfully to plan work which is at the right level of difficulty for students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs and the most-able students. As a result, most students are motivated to do well, show good attitudes to learning and work hard.
- Many teaching assistants provide effective support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs because they make sure that students are appropriately challenged.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects that they teach. This means that they are able to help students effectively to improve their work so that it moves to a higher grade or level. Often, teachers do this through the use of probing questions which require students to think hard.
- Teachers mark students' work regularly in most subjects. The quality of marking is usually good because it helps students to improve their work. However, sometimes, work is not always marked regularly enough and the advice given is not always as precise as it should be. Some teachers do not always check that students have acted on the advice given.
- Sometimes, teachers do not plan to help students develop their writing skills as much as they could, particularly for boys. This means that boys do not always write sufficiently long answers to questions and, therefore, do not reach the level or grade that they are capable of achieving.
- Teaching in the sixth form requires improvement because it is not consistently good. Sometimes, lessons are not accurately pitched at the right level for students, which means work is too hard or too easy. Whilst some teaching is good and improving strongly, there is too much variation between subjects and this results in inconsistent achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good, both in the main academy and in the sixth form. Students behave well in lessons and around the academy at break times. The vast majority of students are polite, courteous and well mannered.
- Students in Year 7 to 11 appreciate the good teaching that they receive, as well as the high quality of personal support and guidance they get when it is needed. Relationships throughout the academy are positive and these make a significant contribution to good learning. As a result, students have good attitudes to learning and they work hard.
- Sixth-form students also have good attitudes to learning because they recognise that teaching is getting better. Even when teaching is not as good as it should be, sixth-form students try hard and show a good commitment to their work.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The academy fulfils statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding; all staff have been checked as required and are trained appropriately to keep students safe and free from harm. Students have a good understanding of safety related issues, including how to keep safe when working online.

- Bullying is rare at the academy and, as a result, students feel safe. Students have a good understanding of the various forms in which bullying can occur and they are confident that, when bullying incidents do happen, staff will deal with matters quickly and effectively.
- Most students attend the academy regularly, but attendance in the sixth form is too low and this has a negative impact on achievement.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal, effectively supported by a strong team of senior leaders and subject leaders, has ensured that achievement, teaching and behaviour and safety are good.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses because they check teaching and achievement regularly. Leaders, quickly, identify weaknesses and effectively take action to improve achievement and teaching because they use this information well to help teachers to learn from each other.
- The curriculum makes a good contribution to students' good achievement and behaviour because it is well matched to students' interests and promotes their personal development well. A range of additional trips, visits and clubs help students to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. The sixth-form curriculum has been improved this year and it is now appropriately matched to students' skills and interests.
- Students have access to good independent advice and guidance regarding their future careers. Older students benefit from good support to help them to make informed decisions about examination subject choices, as well as the opportunities available to them in further and higher education, employment and training. Advice and guidance have improved significantly for sixth-form students this year.
- The leadership of the sixth form is good because leaders have quickly and decisively tackled significant weaknesses in teaching, achievement and previous leadership. Leaders have good systems for regularly checking how well students are achieving and they have made sure that teaching and achievement are improving quickly.
- The academy improvement plan and the sixth-form plan identify the most important areas which need improving. However, neither of these plans contains enough detail to support students in making more rapid progress. They, also, do not contain clear targets to be achieved at various points throughout the year. Consequently, leaders, including the academy council, cannot objectively check if the academy is doing well enough at various points throughout the year.
- The targets which are set to help teachers improve their work and guide decisions about pay increases are not always as detailed as they should be. As a result, the achievement of some students does not always improve as rapidly as it could, particularly in the sixth form.
- The academy sponsor provides a good level of support and challenge to the academy. However, it did not provide enough support for the necessary improvements to the sixth form during the first year when the academy opened.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the academy's strengths and weaknesses well. It monitors students' achievement accurately because governors understand how to interpret achievement

data.

- Governors know how the additional pupil premium and Year 7 'catch-up' funding is used. They are aware that this funding is having a positive impact on the achievement of eligible students because they check this appropriately.
- The governing body knows about the quality of teaching and the management of staff performance and it is fully involved in ensuring teachers receive pay rises only when they have met their targets and their teaching is good. Governors are aware of how staff underperformance is tackled and are appropriately involved when this is necessary.
- The governing body provides a good level of challenge and support to the academy. However, it has not ensured that the academy improvement plan and sixth-form plan contain precise, objective targets to be met at various points throughout the year. As a result, the level of challenge and support is not always as focused as it should be.

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	139100
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	420099

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1242
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Read
Principal	Pamela Hutchison
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01908 563468
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