

Tamworth Enterprise College and AET Academy

Birds Bush Road, Belgrave, Tamworth, B77 2NE

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not all students make good progress from their starting points, particularly in mathematics.
- Although the progress of students supported by additional government funding is improving, they are not catching up quickly enough with their peers.
- Teaching has not been good enough in the past to secure good progress for all groups. Improvements in mathematics are too recent for leaders to be sure they will be sustained.
- Teachers' assessments are not always accurate and, consequently, the work they set is not always matched carefully to students' abilities.
- Information provided by the systems used to track students' achievement is not always used effectively to identify underperforming groups, such as those eligible for the pupil premium.
- Students report that behaviour in a few lessons is not always good enough, so that sometimes their learning is disrupted.
- The curriculum is not meeting the needs of all students because there is an over-reliance on vocational qualifications and too few students study science. Support for students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding is not reinforced sufficiently in academic subjects.
- Governors are very supportive of the academy but are not yet offering leaders sufficient challenge.

The school has the following strengths

- Academy leaders are united and purposeful in their drive to improve teaching and students' achievement.
- Students say that they enjoy school and that they feel safe because there is always someone to talk to if they have problems.
- The academy's own records suggests that current students are making more rapid progress and that achievement will be close to national averages this year.
- Attendance has improved and is now above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 38 lessons, of which eight were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. A number of shorter visits were also made to lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of students, academy leaders, governors and a representative from the academy’s sponsor.
- Inspectors took account of 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and evaluated the written responses from parents and pupils, collected and collated by the academy. Inspectors also took account of 54 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- A range of academy documentation was reviewed and evaluated, including: records of progress made by current students; self-evaluation documents and improvement plans, behaviour and bullying logs; staff performance records; minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding policies and records.
- Inspectors specifically evaluated work from students across Year 7 to Year 10 in English and mathematics.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the academy’s view of the impact and effectiveness of the multi-academy trust’s services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess how well the support provided by the multi-academy trust is helping to improve the academies for which it is responsible.

Inspection team

Merryl Ford, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Richard Johnson

Additional Inspector

Julie Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Anne McAvan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Tamworth Enterprise College is a large secondary academy catering for students aged 11-16 that is sponsored by the AET Academy Trust.
- The vast majority of students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average, and the proportion supported at school action or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (the additional funding allocated by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- Tamworth Enterprise College meets the current floor standard, which is the government's minimum expected for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy provides a range of alternative provision at Torc Vocational Centre, according to students' needs and interests. The Centre is currently run by academy leaders.
- The academy has silver 'Dyslexia Friendly' status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching, particularly in mathematics, so that it is always at least good and more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that the accuracy of teachers' assessments is checked carefully so that work set is always well-matched to the abilities of students and enables all students to make good progress from their starting points.
- Improve achievement for all students, including the more able, by ensuring that:
 - the system for tracking individual students' progress is used better to analyse information about underperforming groups so that interventions can be made at the earliest possible stage to help close gaps.
 - the impact of interventions put in place by leaders is tracked more closely and there is clear evidence of the difference these have made.
- Improve behaviour by:
 - establishing a system for addressing low level disruption in lessons that is understood and applied consistently by all staff across the academy.
- Continue to improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the planned review and evaluation of the curriculum includes a focus on increasing the number of students who study for GCSE courses, particularly science
 - provision made to develop the social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding of students is fully integrated across the curriculum
 - governance is strengthened so that governors have a better understanding of the position regarding students' achievement, particularly those eligible for the pupil premium, and to enable them to offer a higher level of challenge for leaders.

An external review of governance and of the academy's use of pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of students, including those who are more able and those funded by the pupil premium, requires improvement because until recently students have not made sufficient progress, particularly in mathematics. Although there was an improvement in overall achievement for the proportion of students gaining 5 A*- C grades including English and mathematics in 2013, this remained below national levels.
- In the past, the academy has pursued a policy for entering students early for GCSE mathematics. However, not all students have had the opportunity to re-enter to improve their grades and this reduced the overall profile of results in this subject last year.
- The majority of students enter the academy with skills that are significantly below those of students nationally. Since the academy opened there has been a gradual improvement in achievement overall. Nevertheless, the achievement of students who left the academy in 2013 remained significantly below average, particularly in relation to the proportions attaining 5 A* - C GCSE grades including English and mathematics.
- Students supported by the pupil premium funding do better than other similar students nationally. However, this group of students does not do as well as other students in the academy. Although their progress is improving, the gap between these students and others in the academy is large and is not closing quickly enough. In 2013 the gap in English was approximately one third of a GCSE grade and in mathematics approximately two thirds of a GCSE grade.
- The academy uses pupil premium funding to provide one-to-one support for individual students and additional resources to be used in classrooms and for funding individual interventions. However, the way the academy has tracked the progress for this group has not been sharp enough to close the gap in achievement with other students.
- The academy's own monitoring suggests that students currently in Year 11 have made significantly more progress in English and mathematics than was the case last year. Consequently, the number achieving 5 GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics is predicted to increase substantially. This is particularly the case for those students who are not supported by additional funding.
- Students who attend the school's alternative provision achieve well in vocational courses. The academy tracks their attendance and progress effectively and the vast majority of these students say that they enjoy the opportunity to study these courses. Those who study school-based vocational courses achieve equally well.
- Year 7 catch up funding has been used effectively to establish nurture groups which provide well-targeted support for this group of students. As a result they make good progress in English and mathematics from very low starting points.
- Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress because provision is well-matched to their needs.
- The academy has achieved the silver level 'Dyslexia Friendly' status award. This programme is used very effectively by teachers and its impact is reflected in the good progress made by this group of students, particularly in English.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- The majority of teaching seen during the inspection was good and some was outstanding. However, teaching requires improvement because, until recently, this was not uniformly the case, particularly in mathematics where some weaker teaching remains. Academy leaders are aware of this continuing weakness and have taken appropriate steps to address the issue in time for the coming academic year.
- Teaching is not always well matched to the students' abilities and this sometimes leads to a lack of challenge and slower rates of progress. For example, in a Year 7 mathematics lesson students were unsure of what to do for too long because the teacher did not check how much students understood quickly enough.
- Teachers assess students' work regularly but systems for checking the accuracy of their assessments are not yet developed well enough to ensure that the academy's view of students' progress is robust.
- The development of support for students' numeracy skills across the curriculum is in its infancy and is partly responsible for students' lower achievement in this subject. The academy has rightly highlighted this as a key priority.
- In contrast, the academy has a well-established policy to help students to develop their literacy skills in a range of subjects and this was evident in many of the lessons visited by inspectors. Most teachers in most subjects routinely help students to reinforce their literacy skills and this has a positive impact on the progress students make in English.
- The academy has recently introduced a new marking policy that is beginning to have a positive impact on the progress of students. All teachers are now required to provide clear advice about what students have done well and what they need to do next to improve further. Students now respond very well to teachers' guidance and say that the new system helps them to understand how to improve their work.
- Leaders have established clear criteria for teachers to use when planning lessons and this is now a strength of the academy's work. Teachers ensure that activities enable students to develop a wide range of skills and consistently make sure that all students understand how they can improve their work and be successful in their learning.
- Where teaching is good or better, activities are carefully planned to cater for the needs of all the different groups of students within the school. For example in a Year 10 science lesson, students were provided with information at different levels of difficulty and required to locate and analyse information, make inferences and report back their findings, so that students of all abilities were 'experts' in their area.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**requires improvement**

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Although students report that behaviour is improving, they also say that low level disruption in a few lessons sometimes prevents them from learning as well as they could. Students report that teachers deal with this type of behaviour in different ways, so that the sanctions teachers impose, as well as their effectiveness, vary across the academy.
- Students generally behave well around the academy and show respect for each other and for

staff. They say that they enjoy coming to the academy and are proud to be there. Displays and resources in classrooms and corridors are treated with respect. However, where teaching is not good, students' sometimes lose interest, become inattentive and their progress slows

- Overall, parents' views of behaviour in the academy are positive and the vast majority of staff agree. The academy's records show that instances of poor behaviour are reducing as is the number of exclusions.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say that they feel safe, that there are no areas in the academy where this is not the case, and that they are confident that staff deal with problems quickly and effectively. They say that bullying is rare and when it does happen, rapid action is taken.
- Students have a very good understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation and how to keep themselves safe. They say this is because the academy provides effective support through assemblies, form time and personal, social and health education lessons.
- Attendance has improved and is now above the national average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because teaching and achievement have not improved rapidly enough since the academy opened in 2012. However, particularly in the last year, the Principal and other senior leaders have tackled weaknesses in teaching effectively. As a result achievement is improving more rapidly.
- A more rigorous system for tracking pupil progress from their individual starting points has been introduced by leaders and this is already having an impact on improving teacher's planning. However, information provided by the system is not always used effectively to enable leaders, including governors, to identify underperforming groups, such as those eligible for the pupil premium.
- A broad and balanced curriculum is in place in Key Stage 3 but the curriculum at Key Stage 4 does not currently offer a broad enough range of academic subjects and too few students choose to take GCSE courses, particularly in science. Academy leaders have rightly identified this as a priority for next academic year. The programme to promote students' social, moral and cultural development is delivered through different subjects across the curriculum. However, leaders are aware that this needs further development and reinforcement.
- Leaders now monitor the quality of teaching well. Regular checks, both formal and informal, ensure that underperformance is identified rapidly and appropriate support and challenge put in place as necessary. All teachers now have individual development plans and the training programme is well-thought out to meet the academy's priorities as well as the more specific needs of individual teachers. However, these initiatives have not had sufficient or equal impact on all subjects and aspects of the academy's work.
- Subject leaders have been provided with good training so that they are now fully involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and the progress of students in their areas of responsibility. The introduction of 'Directors of Learning' has further enhanced this process. Consequently all leaders at this level have a good understanding of what effective teaching looks like.
- Students have access to good guidance from the academy and from other sources, on possible

options Post 16 and for their future careers.

- All requirements for safeguarding are fully met by the academy.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are extremely supportive of the academy and its leaders. They share the academy vision for improvement and are kept well-informed through regular reports from the Principal about student progress and the quality of teaching. They are involved in performance management and ensure that pay progression is linked to teachers' performance. However, they are too reliant on received information so that they lack an independent view of how rapidly the academy is making progress. Consequently, they have an overly optimistic view of how well the academy is doing and do not balance their support with effective challenge.
- Governors know how pupil premium funding is spent but they do not have a clear view of the impact it is having on improving students' progress.

■ **The Multi-Academy Trust**

Improved and effective support from the trust is now in place. Since January of this year, regular and focused support and challenge has been provided. Consequently the pace of improvement has increased. Termly quality assurance meetings have ensured that regular monitoring of student progress and the quality of teaching has taken place and informed whole academy targets. Support provided through the trust, particularly to improve mathematics, has been effective.

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	138435
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	426896
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	904
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Gurney
Principal	Simon Turney
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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