

# The JCB Academy

Mill Street, Rocester, ST14 5JX

<b>Inspection dates</b>		7–8 May 2014	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Leadership, including governance, is good and improving. The leadership team and governors have worked together to successfully raise standards. As a result, all groups of students are making sustained progress and most are achieving well.
- Students make outstanding progress in mathematics, engineering and most vocational courses.
- Many students enter apprenticeships, higher education courses and careers which reflect the characteristics of the University Technical College and its high reputation in the engineering and business industries and professions.
- The improvement in students' achievement is a direct result of the academy's drive to improve learning and teaching. Teaching is good and improving. Teachers have high expectations and are ambitious for students' achievement.
- Students feel exceptionally safe at the academy. Parents confirm this view. Attendance is above average and improving.
- Students behave well, take their learning seriously and are proud of their academy. They have good manners and are welcoming to visitors.
- The sixth form is good. Students are making good progress from their starting points and a greater number of students are completing their courses because they follow a well-planned curriculum that offers students a range of appropriate and varied courses and qualifications.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Teachers do not consistently check to ensure students understand the work.
- Some subject leaders are still developing their skills and their actions have yet to impact significantly in some areas.
- Marking and feedback do not always provide students with clear guidance about how to improve their work. Where marking is good, students do not always act on the advice given.
- Students' progress in reading is inconsistent.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning and teaching in 21 lessons across all year groups, four of which were joint observations with senior leaders. The work in students' books and files was evaluated. In addition, they made shorter visits to lessons and extracurricular activities.
- The inspection team observed the behaviour of students as they arrived at the academy, during lesson changeovers, at break and lunchtimes, as they left the academy premises at the end of the day as well as in lessons.
- Account was taken of the results of the academy's commercially sourced questionnaire given to parents as there were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, for those to be taken into account by inspectors.
- Responses from the 40 members of staff who returned questionnaires were also considered.
- Inspectors looked at important documents including the academy's self-evaluation, the improvement plan and examination results and records of students' assessment. They scrutinised the academy's policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection. They examined records relating to behaviour and attendance and looked at documents used by leaders and governors to check the work of staff at the academy.
- Inspectors met with groups of students of different ages, abilities and backgrounds. They discussed achievement, teaching, behaviour and safety.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, academy leaders, including heads of subjects, governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.

## Inspection team

Peter Humphries, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Victor Reid

Her Majesty's Inspector

Susan Tabberer

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The academy was converted to a free school University Technical College in January 2013 by the Department for Education. It is housed in a former Arkwright mill. The academy is sponsored by the construction equipment manufacturer JCB and has a specialism in engineering and business. The academy is supported by Harper Adams University College.
- Students are admitted in Year 10 and Year 12 to the academy from a range of schools across Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Derby and Stoke-on-Trent.
- The academy is smaller than an average-sized secondary school.
- There are considerably more boys (91 percent overall), than girls in all years.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average. This is additional funding allocated for groups of pupils, including those looked after by the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is well below average.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- There are no students attending alternative provision.
- The Principal provides support to leaders in other newly established University Technical Colleges.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching so that inconsistencies are eliminated and more is outstanding by:
  - improving the consistency of marking so that all students are given clear guidance about how to improve their work
  - ensuring that students act on teachers' advice so that the quality of their work improves
  - teachers frequently checking students' work in lessons to ensure they understand the work and have completed tasks correctly
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership by:
  - developing the skills and roles of subject leaders through high-quality training
  - ensuring that all subject leaders take more direct responsibility for their departments particularly for improving the quality of learning and teaching and in holding teams to account for the progress of the students in their subjects
  - swiftly implementing plans to develop reading across all subjects, closely monitoring the impact on improving students' reading skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good. While students start the academy with attainment that is broadly average, a significant minority struggle with reading and writing. All students make good progress from their starting points to reach above average standards, especially in mathematics and science.
- In 2013, the percentage of students who gained five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics was broadly average and an improvement on the figure in 2012. Information provided by the academy leaders indicates that this figure is due to rise again in 2014.
- In 2013, progress in English overall was similar to that in other schools in England but improvements in teaching and the curriculum since September 2013 mean that results are set to rise this year. Evidence from the work in students' books shows that students' writing skills develop well, especially in the way they use subject specific or technical vocabulary and terminology. Students' reading skills are less well developed as they do not have frequent opportunities to read a range of material. Academy leaders have recently invested in a commercial reading age and comprehension test which they have used to identify individual students in need of support and intervention. Information provided by the academy shows that this intervention is beginning to improve the reading skills of most students. Sixth form students who did not achieve A\* to C in GCSE English follow a re-take course in Year 12. The majority of students achieved an A\* to C grade in the November 2013 GCSE examinations. All students in the sixth form have an A\* to C GCSE grade in mathematics.
- Students' numeracy skills are extremely well developed and they are able to use and apply these skills in a range of situations and subjects such as engineering, business studies and science. Students show resilience when they encounter mathematical problems and can use a range of strategies and approaches to solving problems. Students' attainment in mathematics has been significantly above national figures for the last two years.
- Students make outstanding progress in vocational courses including engineering at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. They have gained a wide range of engineering skills through projects developed in collaboration with, for example, Rolls-Royce, Toyota, Network Rail and JCB.
- Progress in modern foreign languages is slower than in other subjects. Concerted action by senior leaders is starting to improve standards in this subject.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points, especially in mathematics and science. This is because their progress is tracked effectively so that good support is provided at the right time to have an impact.
- Students supported by the pupil premium make good progress because the academy provides a wide range of academic and personal help. These students make better progress than similar students in other schools. On average, students known to be eligible for free school meals gained approximately a third of a grade lower than other students in English and two thirds of a grade lower in mathematics. Fewer students eligible for free school meals made expected progress in English and mathematics compared to other students and the difference grew in 2013. However, information on students' progress provided by the academy shows that this trend has been reversed this year.

- The most able students make good progress overall. The percentage making expected progress is higher than national figures in mathematics and broadly in line in English.
- The academy enters a small number of students early for GCSE examinations in mathematics. A minority of these students did not achieve their target grade. However, they will re-sit the examination in June. The academy does not enter students early for GCSE examinations in English.
- The academy prepares its student extremely well for their future education and careers. The majority of students have well developed literacy, communication and numeracy skills. In 2013, all Year 11 students carried on into further education, employment or training. All sixth form students leaving the academy went to university, found employment or entered an apprenticeship.
- A wide range of evidence, such as information on progress, work scrutiny and observations of learning, shows that the achievement in the sixth form is good.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- As a result of high quality teaching, resources and state-of-the-art equipment students are able to display excellent knowledge and application of engineering, business and problem solving skills in vocational courses, challenge tasks and projects.
- The exceptional learning in the engineering and technical lessons is underpinned by teachers inspiring students with their professional experience and deep knowledge of the engineering and business industry. Students' rapid improvement over time is evident in enrichment activities; for example Key Stage 4 students have produced precision made scaled parts for car engines in a project with Toyota.
- Teaching is good in the great majority of subjects, especially in English, mathematics and science. In English, results have improved due to a strong academy focus on improving students' writing skills. However, students' reading skills are less well developed.
- The marking of students' books is frequent and often detailed. However, some teachers provide students with too little guidance about how to improve their work. There are some examples of very good practice, for example in English, but students do not always act on teachers' advice and this slows their progress.
- In subjects where students do well, their knowledge and understanding is frequently checked by teachers who then modify the learning activities to meet the emerging needs of the students. However, in some lessons teachers do not check students' understanding which means students' misconceptions and misunderstandings are not challenged or corrected.
- In the sixth form, teaching is at least good and sometimes better. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subjects and of the expectations of the AS- and A-level examinations. As a result, they give students the knowledge and skills to be able to tackle examinations successfully and to develop wider employability skills, for example, team working, problem solving and decision making skills.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure teaching meets the needs of the whole group, including disabled students and those with special educational needs. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and have a clear impact on raising the achievement of the

students with whom they work.

- Students who met with inspectors spoke positively about the quality of teaching, particularly in the vocational subjects.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The academy is a calm and purposeful environment in which to learn and thrive socially, personally and academically. Students' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development permeates many aspects of academy life. As a result, students and staff say that students get along very well together.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students have a strong understanding of safety matters, including specific safety requirements for working with advanced machinery and equipment and e-safety. Students state that they feel exceptionally safe in the academy and parents confirm this view. This is because all adults provide a high level of care for the students and are concerned for both their academic and personal achievements. In discussions, students were very positive about the care and support they are given by their learning mentors.
- Students whose circumstances make them vulnerable, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, told inspectors that they are well cared for by staff and students.
- Students' attendance, including in the sixth form, those who are supported by the pupil premium grant and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, has improved over the last year and is above the national average for secondary schools.
- The behaviour of students is good and they have positive attitudes towards learning.
- Incidents of poor behaviour disrupting learning in lessons are rare because the majority of students are keen to learn. However, occasionally, where teaching is not good and the lesson content lacks challenge, students' behaviour deteriorates a little as they lose concentration.
- The numbers of fixed term exclusions are decreasing rapidly.
- Students are proud of their academy and they demonstrate this by wearing their uniform with pride. The academy buildings and facilities are treated with respect by all students. After break and lunchtimes, there is no litter. The students' toilets are clean, hygienic and free from graffiti.
- Students arrive punctually at the academy. Students' movements about the buildings are safe and well-organised and they generally arrive at lessons on time though some students do arrive late. The behaviour in the dining room is excellent. The high quality food provided in the dining room is enjoyed by a large number of students in a pleasant, welcoming 'family' atmosphere as students dine with their learning mentors.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The Principal sets the tone for all members of the academy community through his clear expectations and focus on improving achievement.

- Senior leaders measure students' progress thoroughly to make sure they always know how students are doing. If a weakness in teaching or students' performance comes to light, academy leaders act quickly to address the issues. The leadership of the sixth form has been particularly effective in raising students' achievement by implementing a curriculum that meets the needs of students.
- Senior staff have ensured that there is a good match between how well teachers are paid and how well students' achieve. Teachers' targets are demanding and closely linked to their analysis of the academy's current strengths and areas for improvement. However, the programme of training for subject leaders, teachers and other staff has not always been successful in ensuring academy staff improve their performance.
- Most middle leaders are good leaders of learning and teaching in their areas. Senior leaders hold them to account for the progress that students make. However, not all leaders have been effective in checking that all teachers consistently provide feedback that enables students to make good progress.
- The strategies to improve students' reading skills and to encourage them to read widely and often are not applied consistently. The monitoring and evaluation of the impact of these strategies is in the early stages of implementation. As a consequence, a minority of students do not read as well as they should.
- The academy is very effective in ensuring equality of opportunity for all students. The performance of groups is monitored closely, to ensure that all achieve well, including those in receipt of the pupil premium. Good relationships are fostered both within the academy and with business partners.
- The range of subjects provided fully supports the academy's aim of 'developing engineers and business leaders for the future'. The sixth form choice of subjects has recently been revised to better serve the needs of students of different abilities. In Key Stage 4 and 5 there are a good range of both academic and technical courses.
- The tracking of student' progress is very effective and interventions to support them are excellent. Students speak highly of the support they receive from learning mentors and of the timely and relevant information, advice and guidance they receive.
- There is a vast range of enrichment activities such as clay pigeon shooting, chess, music, car building and a range of sporting activities that enhance students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Students from the academy have achieved success in many national competitions.
- Arrangements for child protection and safeguarding are extensive. All statutory requirements are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a good understanding of the academy's strengths and areas for improvement. It fulfils its role effectively, challenging and holding the academy leaders to account for students' achievement, and supporting improvement. This is because governors receive clear information about the academy's performance from the senior leadership team, which they compare with national data. Governors are highly skilled and experienced in the world of business and industry and effectively support the academy's delivery of high-quality engineering and business education. Governors make regular visits to the academy and have a sound understanding of teaching quality and what is being done to tackle underperformance.

Governors set targets for the Principal and have supported him in taking robust and effective action where there has been underperformance of staff. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is being spent and the impact this has on students' achievements.

- The governing body ensures that the requirements for the safeguarding of students are met and that the budget is well managed.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139234
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	441272

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	University technical college
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	426
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	152
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Bell
<b>Principal</b>	Jim Wade
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01889 506100
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	info@jcbacademy.com

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