

# Nene Park Academy

Oundle Road, Orton Longueville, Peterborough, PE2 7EA

**Inspection dates** 20–21 November 2013

<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.

- Standards are generally in line with or above the national figure and rising more rapidly than the national average.
- Achievement is good and rising rapidly. Significant numbers of students from different ethnic backgrounds make outstanding progress.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are beginning to do well because support has been reorganised.
- Assessment information is used well at a strategic level to set targets and raise standards.
- The academy's checking and review of teaching are consistently accurate. Teaching is good. Students respond very positively to well-planned lessons.
- Behaviour is good. Students work particularly well together, say they feel safe and have a very positive attitude to learning.
- Students are courteous and well mannered. A calm, friendly atmosphere is evident around the academy. Parents and guardians are pleased with the school.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Standards are below average but rising rapidly as a result of good teaching.
- Attendance is in line with the national average and rising.
- Additional government funding has been used well to support students who need extra help. As a result, the gap between their achievement and that of their peers is closing rapidly.
- Leadership and management are good. Staff are proud to be part of a rapidly improving team.
- Working together effectively, senior staff, governors, the Cambridge Meridian Academies' Trust, and the local education authority have developed a good school in wonderful new buildings.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is too low and the match of task to learning need varies at times
- In a small minority of lessons teaching lacks pace and there is insufficient challenge for some groups of students.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team conducted 44 lesson observations and reviewed a number of short sessions. Members of the senior management team worked alongside inspectors in the joint observation of teaching.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the Cambridge Meridian Academies' Trust, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and representatives of the local authority. The executive principal of the trust and the Principal of Nene Park Academy were fully involved in the inspection along with other nominated staff. Meetings and informal discussions were held with groups of students.
- The inspectors reviewed 106 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 48 staff responses to the Ofsted questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the academy improvement plan, a variety of review documents produced by the academy and senior staff, the academy's analysis of students' progress, the Principal's reports to the governing body, and the minutes of governing body meetings.

## Inspection team

David Jones, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Catherine Anwar

Her Majesty's Inspector

Douglas Folan

Additional Inspector

Cheryl Jackson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school, although the number on roll is rising.
- The proportion of students who represent minority ethnic groups is above average and so is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students for whom the academy receives the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of students who need extra help with their learning and are supported by school action is above average but declining. The proportion at school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs is just above average.
- The local authority maintains an 11-place unit specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs on the autistic spectrum. These students are fully integrated into mainstream provision.
- The academy does not make use of any alternative educational provision.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment
- The academy has entered into an agreement with Peterborough United FC to provide the formal education for the club's young apprentices.
- Nene Park Academy is sponsored by Cambridge Meridian Academies' Trust (CMAT), a multi-academy trust, whose first academy was Swavesey Village College.

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

- Raise standards and ensure that students progress equally well in all subjects and all year groups by:
  - increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching available
  - ensuring that time is used well in all lessons
  - ensuring that staff make consistent use of the academy's robust assessment data to plan lessons that fully cater for the abilities of all students.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good; overall students' progress is above average and improving rapidly. Many students enter the academy with low reading, writing and mathematical skills although this is improving. Every subject area places considerable emphasis on improving the students' reading and writing skills.
- In 2012, attainment as measured by students' performance across their best eight subjects was just above the national average. This has improved further in 2013 and the proportion of students securing five higher-grade GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, was above the national average.
- Over a quarter of the students on roll come from a wide variety of ethnic background and collectively their attainment and achievement were good in 2012 and again in 2013. Good teaching is only part of this story; in an outstanding Year 10 computer studies lesson, where students were learning to refine their database research skills, students of eastern European origin were supporting each other in their home language and then sharing ideas with their English speaking peers. Having developed this peer group discussion, the teacher skilfully managed a whole-class debate where students from all backgrounds listened respectfully to their classmates before offering comments and ideas of their own. More-able students make good progress.
- Students who are disabled or who have a statement of special educational needs are beginning to make good progress. Students with autism and related complex learning needs settle well and are soon integrated into mainstream provision where they make good progress because of careful placement and effective support.
- Students in need of extra help and those in the care of the local authority make good progress. This is because of the wide range of personal and academic support provided, in part by additional government funding (the pupil premium), the Years 7 'catch up grant' and supplemented by the academy's own funds.
- The standards secured by students supported by the pupil premium have improved significantly in the last two years and are close to the national average. The progress these students make is improving rapidly and it has been above the national average for the last two years. The gap in performance between these students, as measured against the rest of the academy in average points scored, closed significantly in 2013 from 39 points to seven points. Those who received this support last year made a year's progress in English and mathematics in six months.
- Students who are part of the Peterborough United FC young apprentices programme make good academic progress and 85% secured five higher-grade GCSE passes, including English and mathematics in 2013.
- Senior staff review and revise the organisation of subject teaching on a regular basis to ensure individuals progress well. Target setting is well organised; the students are given minimum expected progress levels which are above national expectations. The use of early entry to GCSE examinations is managed effectively to make certain that students can achieve well and then move on to more demanding courses.
- Standards in the sixth form are below average. The average points score per examination entry

was below the national average at A level and AS level. However, this represents good progress for students whose individual starting points were often well below the national average. As a result of the improvements in teaching, students are now making rapid progress in the expanding sixth form.

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

- Teaching is effective and as a result standards have risen and students make good progress. During this inspection, the significant majority of teaching observed was good or better, a figure close to the detailed records maintained by the academy. All sixth form teaching was good.
- There is strong teaching in all subject areas, although some variations remain. Subject teams are effective and students express confidence in the availability and nature of the personalised support provided by staff during breaks or out of academy hours.
- Lesson planning is thorough, showing teachers' strong personal knowledge of the students. However, the use of time varies in its effectiveness and some marking is inconsistent. Teaching staff do not have easy access to the wealth of assessment data available on all students. Lesson plans record the students' minimum expected targets, but not their prior attainment and recent progress.
- Lessons are often focused on gaps in the students' prior learning. In a good Year 11 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher focused on revising the students' knowledge and understanding of subject vocabulary so that their accurate algebraic skills could be linked to the language of examination questions.
- Teachers ask probing questions and seek to create high-level discussion in every lesson. In an outstanding Year 10 history lesson, students showed a very strong grasp of German history between the two World Wars and the teacher was quick to channel this into a demanding written task.
- Small teaching sets are used well to support groups of vulnerable students. In an effective Year 11 English lesson, a variety of vulnerable individuals, including autistic students, and those being reintegrated into mainstream provision, worked with dedication to improve their descriptive writing skills. Teaching assistants provided valuable support in these teaching sets.
- Where teaching required improvement, two factors were often significant. In some lessons, the pace of the lesson was allowed to slow after a promising start because students were given too much time to complete the main task. In other lessons, the match of task to the students' learning needs did not always engage or provide access for students' with a wide range of abilities.

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

- Students have positive attitudes to learning and respond with enthusiasm and application where teaching is good or better. Attendance has risen rapidly since the academy opened and is currently in line with the national average. This improvement is the result of the rigorous monitoring of attendance, high expectations of students and their families, and improved communication with parents and carers. The pastoral teams make attendance a feature of every tutorial session.
- Punctuality in the mornings and to lessons is generally good. Students move around the

corridors and staircases in easy social groups and without wasting time.

- Students have a very good understanding of safety matters, particularly e-safety. They state that bullying, racism and discrimination are rare and are dealt with very effectively; students said, 'no racism here we all get on well', 'bullying rare now – properly dealt with'. Students appreciate the vertical tutor groups where they mix with students from other year groups and comment that 'house competition gives you a buzz'. At lunch times, students are considerate of those around them and an easy social atmosphere prevails. Inspectors took many formal and informal opportunities to speak with students; Year 13 students said they wished they had enjoyed such good facilities and teaching when they were younger.
- Staff supervision of behaviour is low-key and effective. Students are keen to engage staff and visiting adults in conversation when out of the classroom and clearly appreciate the interest of staff in them as individuals.
- The academy's Parent View website records a well-above average rate of response. Over 80% of parents and carers offered positive views to all 12 of the questions and 93% of parents and carers stated they would recommend this academy to another parent. Such views were confirmed by discussions with students.

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

- Creating a successful new academy requires a very strong leadership team, subject leaders with talent, pastoral staff the students value and effective teachers, support staff and governors who want to be involved and who give their time and expertise every day. Vital to the whole project is a sponsor who can offer advice, experience and role models at every level. Nene Park Academy is fortunate in all of these respects.
- The Principal, senior staff and the executive principal have high expectations and lead by example. Staff and students have a very positive opinion of the senior team. Middle leaders are well supported and successful efforts have been made to build a strong sixth form team and to enhance the provision for those who find learning difficult. The academy provides exceptionally well for all its students' needs and ensures that they are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- The monitoring of teaching by senior staff is rigorous and accurate. From this secure performance management structure, staff development opportunities have driven forward the improvement in teaching since the academy opened. The senior leaders worked alongside inspectors in the joint evaluation of teaching and the views they expressed consistently matched the judgements given by the inspectors.
- Self-evaluation is robust and the academy's actions are carefully planned, concerted and very effective. The performance management targets set by the Cambridge Meridian Academies' Trust for the Principal, and by the senior team for every member of staff, are linked to improvements in teaching and provision.
- Pupil premium funds are used particularly well. The improvements made in English, mathematics and in help for those who find learning difficult, have been supported by this government funding and the academy's own resources.
- The senior staff have built effective subject and pastoral teams, and the working relationships between these teams have been a significant factor in the successful drive for high standards.

- The curriculum provides effectively for all groups of students, including disabled students and those in need of extra support. Adjustments to the curriculum to meet individual needs have secured very positive attitudes to learning and rising standards.
- The clarity and extent of information provided to the governing body are key to the effective working relationship between senior staff governors and the academy trust.
- The local authority made £15 million available to secure the transformation of the academy buildings when government funding was withdrawn.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The majority of members of the governing body are nominated by the Cambridge Meridian Academies' Trust (CMAT). They have a wide range of commercial, professional and educational backgrounds and all are passionate about building an outstanding academy to serve this community. Such expertise has been a critical part of the school improvement secured to date. Governors are very well trained and are fully informed about how the academy is performing. The governing body provides exceptional challenge because of the clarity of information available from a senior management team with a relentless focus on high-quality education for all. The governing body is knowledgeable and consistently compares the academy's progress to the standards secured at the sponsor academy. Governors make regular visits to the school and understand where teaching is most effective. The CMAT personnel committee check the impact of senior staff reviews of teaching and ensure that teachers' progress through the pay scales is related to their effectiveness in raising standards. The CMAT Trust set targets for the Principal, and check carefully how well these are being met. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is being spent and closely monitor the impact of this and all other spending to ensure that the academy's budget is being used efficiently to help students make rapid progress. The governing body ensures that requirements for the safeguarding of students are met.

## 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>	137082
<b>Local authority</b>	Peterborough
<b>Inspection number</b>	399842

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy Sponsor-Led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<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>	947
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	156
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Phillipson
<b>Principal</b>	Steve Howard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not Previously Inspected
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