

Nicholas Chamberlaine Technology College

Bulkington Road, Bedworth, CV12 9EA

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The acting headteacher's inspirational leadership has quickly secured the confidence of the school community. She has raised the expectations of what staff and pupils can achieve, and has provided a clear plan of action. As a result, teaching and achievement are improving rapidly.
- Governors use their professional skills well to support the school and to provide an appropriate level of challenge. The academy trust has taken effective steps to broaden students' cultural awareness and raise their aspirations.
- Leaders have worked hard to achieve a stable staff. They hold teachers to account for their impact on students' achievement, and only reward good performance.
- Students rightly feel very safe in school.
- Teaching is good. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects, and check students' understanding regularly so that they can adapt their lessons when necessary.
- Students' behaviour is generally good and is improving rapidly. Their attitudes to learning are positive, and they work hard.
- Students make good progress in almost all subjects, including English and mathematics. Attainment and rates of progress have risen markedly during this academic year.
- Leaders have rigorously reviewed the support provided for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and this is now very effective. As a result, these students achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes the work set for the most-able students is not sufficiently challenging.
- In a few instances, teachers' marking does not meet the school's expectations or be clear enough to help students to improve their work.
- The teaching by inexperienced and temporary staff is not always matched well to what students already know, and does not consistently ensure they make good progress.
- The rate of exclusions rose when the new school increased its expectations of students' conduct, and has only recently fallen to average levels.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Although leadership and teaching are improving, there remains some underachievement at advanced level. Students considering apprenticeships or employment are not always supported sufficiently.
- Leaders have recently increased the opportunities outside lessons for sixth form students to develop their social, cultural and sporting abilities, but students' uptake of these opportunities is limited.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 42 lessons taught by 39 different teachers; seven observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also saw students learning in small groups outside their normal classes. They visited an assembly and several form groups, and observed children’s conduct at social times.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, other leaders, class teachers, governors and representatives of the Griffin Schools Trust, the sponsors.
- Inspectors met with four groups of students, including three selected at random, and spoke to many others informally. Inspectors listened to students reading.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work in lessons. They scrutinised a considerable number of exercise books in depth, and checked teachers’ assessments of attainment and progress. They also looked at information on students’ targets and current levels of achievement.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents. These included: development plans and their evaluations; records of how leaders check on teaching and students’ behaviour; independent evaluations of the school’s progress; minutes of governing body meetings; case studies; policies; records showing how the school supports vulnerable students and checks on their progress; and school publicity.
- Inspectors took into consideration the 23 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. They also considered the 44 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

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Full report

Information about this school

- Nicholas Chamberlaine Technology College is slightly larger than average secondary school.
- Nicholas Chamberlaine Technology College opened as an academy school on 1 September 2013, sponsored by the Griffin Schools Trust. The school no longer has a subject specialism.
- The large majority of students come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium, which is the additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care, is average.
- At Key Stage 4, a very small number of students currently attend North Warwickshire and Hinckley College full-time to follow courses which are largely work-related. A very small number of Key Stage 3 students have recently taken up short-term full-time placements at the local authority's 'Positive About Young People' project.
- According to the last set of published results, the school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of students in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11. This is because the school entered students for 'English Literature and English', rather than for the more usual examination in English Language.
- The school has experienced difficulties in recruiting sufficient full-time and permanent staff since it opened as an academy, but leaders are confident that there will be a full complement of permanent staff to begin the new school year in September. The acting headteacher was appointed from 1 November 2014 and the deputy headteacher took up her post when the school opened. Two assistant headteachers took up their posts in January 2014, and the head of sixth form in April 2015. Several other leaders are also relatively new to their positions.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that the work set for the most-able students in every class is always sufficiently challenging to ensure they make outstanding progress
 - making sure that all written marking follows the school's policy and makes clear to students precisely how they can improve their work.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - providing less-experienced and temporary teachers with the training and guidance they need to teach consistently well
 - ensuring all teachers consistently provide well-planned activities for all students that reflect what students already know and can do
 - continuing to reduce the use of fixed term exclusion by developing alternative arrangements to support students whose behaviour is a cause for concern within the school.
- Improve sixth form provision by:
 - consolidating the programmes of study offered to students so that, in addition to their subject lessons, they have access to a wide range of activities that support their social and cultural development and sports skills
 - providing better support and guidance for students considering apprenticeships or employment
 - checking students' progress systematically to ensure that the recent improvements leaders have made in the quality of teaching are compensating for the legacy of underachievement seen in previous years, especially at advanced level.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since her appointment in November, the acting headteacher has united the school, set a clear direction for improvement and significantly increased expectations for what both staff and students can achieve. She has ensured that the academic targets set for individual students are challenging, and that these are raised if students achieve them before the end of the course. Information about students' progress is analysed rigorously, so that students at risk of falling behind can be targeted and staff held to account. The result is an enthusiastic school culture fully centred on improving teaching and further raising students' achievement.
- In the past, the school has struggled to recruit and retain high quality staff. Current leaders have been both determined and creative in reducing the impact of this instability on students' learning, and more recently, in making successful appointments at all levels. They have put in place strong and detailed arrangements to evaluate teachers' performance, and only those who secure good progress for their students receive pay rises or promotion. Staff, including teachers at an early stage of their careers, say that training is proving very helpful in improving their skills.
- The acting headteacher has raised the school's expectations for students' conduct. Initially, this was met by some resistance, but the reluctance to comply is dwindling; behaviour is improving rapidly as a result. The school works increasingly effectively with those parents who have previously been distrustful of the school.
- Leaders' judgements of the quality of teaching during the inspection accorded with those of inspectors. Evaluation of the school's performance is detailed and objective, in part because it is informed by substantial external reviews by suitably qualified consultants. Improvement plans are equally detailed, and benefit from clear milestones against which progress is systematically tracked by leaders.
- Subject and other leaders entirely share the headteacher's commitment to high standards and greater consistency, rewarding the trust placed in them by senior leaders. Some have shouldered an onerous burden in their efforts to mitigate the effects of temporary staffing. They make sure that all teachers' judgements about students' work are consistent and accurate, working particularly closely with examination boards and other schools to confirm the accuracy of assessments. However, leadership in the sixth form has only recently risen to the same level as that consistently shown by subject and other leaders in the main part of the school. Leaders are taking decisive steps to improve sixth form provision, but the impact of some of these actions is only now beginning to become evident.
- The school has spent the pupil premium effectively by providing additional teaching in all year groups and on strategies that are designed to keep disadvantaged students fully engaged in their learning. Reading receives a special priority. Leaders work closely with local primary schools to ensure that both on a cohort and an individual level, students' performance does not dip on transfer to secondary school.
- Leaders have significantly improved the provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs to ensure teachers provide a precise focus on how well students are learning as well as on the level of emotional and other forms of support. Skilled staff address any medical, social and emotional barriers to education, and leaders provide teachers with good guidance on how to plan learning that is adapted to these students' starting points.
- Leaders pay close attention to the learning of individual students and that of different groups. The good support the school provides for disadvantaged students, together with its clear stand against any form of discrimination, promotes equality of opportunity effectively.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and offers a wide range of courses at Key Stage 4. The school will retain the use of National Curriculum levels at Key Stage 3 until the academy trust devises an alternative pattern of assessment for its primary and secondary schools. The school provides an impressive range of after-school sport and aesthetic and cultural activities as part of its commitment to widen students' horizons. However, leaders acknowledge that students' uptake of these opportunities in

the sixth form has been disappointing.

- The school promotes students' moral, social and cultural development well through taught lessons in religious education, where the GCSE examination is compulsory at Key Stage 4, and other humanities subjects. Assemblies are used to provide a particular focus on important social and cultural issues. The school places a strong emphasis on ensuring students learn about the key values and institutions that underpin the British way of life. Students are encouraged to contribute to decision-making and to undertake voluntary work, although the take-up of these opportunities is uneven. However, the effectiveness of the overall programme of activities ensures that students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet statutory requirements. Staff keep careful records, and react quickly to involve other agencies to help students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Staff are well trained and are able to quickly identify any students who may be at risk. Regular site inspections and maintenance keep the large site safe.
- Students receive effective careers guidance and are increasingly encouraged to have high aspirations when choosing their careers. As a result, almost all students, both those leaving the main school and those leaving the sixth form, find appropriate placements in further education and training.
- Staff monitor the progress, behaviour and attendance of students attending alternative provision rigorously and frequently. They amend or terminate provision if it is not proving successful.
- The academy trust has renewed the vision for the school, placing a particular emphasis on developing the aspirations of both the students and the community the school serves. To this end, it is developing links with other schools in the trust, so that, for example, students have the opportunity to contribute to the running of a trust schools arts festival. It has also encouraged the school to devise more detailed procedures for monitoring progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are providing effective oversight of the school. Some governors contribute specific skills, for example in finance and site management. Trust representatives, with appropriate professional expertise, visit the school regularly and check directly on leaders' judgments. Governors have made sure that they are well trained and informed, although they acknowledge that some governors need to develop a sharper understanding of how well students achieve for themselves, and not rely on other governors to tell them. Meeting records show that governors ask challenging and detailed questions about students' attainment and behaviour, in order to compare these with other schools nationally, and regularly review the quality of teaching in the school and the impact of the pupil premium.
 - Governors work closely with the headteacher to operate the school's robust performance management scheme. They ensure that they and leaders only reward good teaching and identify quickly where there is weaker performance.
 - Governors check that the school complies with all safeguarding requirements. They check the arrangements for school trips and monitor the safety of the site. They ensure that the school works within its budget. Governors have taken the initial steps to secure significant financial investment in the dated school buildings.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students approach their learning with commitment, arrive punctually, bring the right equipment to class and work hard. Their willingness to learn is reflected in the tidy presentation of their work. They increasingly understand how their behaviour contributes to their learning, and take responsibility for their own progress. For example, in a food technology lesson, a Year 10 student explained how, with the help of the school, he was now working hard to pass a subject he had previously been likely to fail.

- During the inspection, students were polite and helpful. Their conduct at social times was conspicuously orderly and responsible, and they moved swiftly to classes at the end of breaks. They respect the school's facilities and very seldom drop any litter.
- The school records behavioural incidents carefully, and this shows a steadily improving pattern of conduct. There have been some name-calling incidents, which the school has taken very seriously and to which it has responded promptly and effectively. When the acting headteacher was appointed, she raised expectations of students' attitudes and behaviour, and as a consequence, the rate of fixed term exclusion rose. It is now falling, but remains at a rate equivalent to the national average.
- Students told inspectors that there is a small amount of low-level disruption in lessons, albeit on rare occasions, and that this was almost always when temporary or inexperienced teachers took the class. Inspection evidence confirmed that such disruption was infrequent and inspectors wholly agreed with students as to the most frequent reasons for it.
- Those few students who attend alternative provision off-site know how they have to behave, and they are well supervised. As a result, students' attitudes and conduct in this provision are good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Child protection procedures are robust, and staff are alert to any various risks to students' safety. Leaders check thoroughly that visitors, including contractors, pose no risk to students. They take decisive action when needed. First aid and medical arrangements are very well organised. The school involves other agencies promptly when there is a need to support potentially vulnerable students. All necessary policies and risk assessments are in place.
- Students are emphatic that they feel safe in school, and the very large majority of their parents agree. Students report that bullying in the form of name-calling is very rare. There are well-understood procedures for raising concerns, and the school resolves any problems swiftly. Students are well informed about different types of risk, including those posed by the internet and some extremist groups.
- The school receives weekly updates on the attendance of students at alternative provision, and leaders follow up any absences straightaway. Staff visit centres offering alternative provision regularly to check on students' progress and well-being, so that they know they are safe and that the provision is properly tailored to their needs.
- Attendance since the school opened as an academy has been broadly average. It is currently rising slowly overall, but more quickly for targeted groups such as disabled students and those who have special educational needs.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in the main school and in the sixth form is improving strongly because leaders hold teachers to account and because an increasing number of posts are now being filled by talented and permanent staff. Relationships between teachers and their classes are, in the main, strong. Teachers plan activities carefully so that they engage students' interest well; consequently, students participate readily in discussions and lessons, putting forward their own views and listening carefully to other students' contributions. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain ideas in a clear and well-structured manner, so that students make secure gains in their understanding.
- Teachers plan work carefully so that it builds on what students can already do. During the inspection, the great majority of activities seen by inspectors were appropriately challenging for students of different abilities, and as a result, in the large majority of lessons, students made at least good progress. However, this was less consistently evident in the case of the most-able students. Teachers routinely check on students' understanding - for example using mini whiteboards - and use the outcomes to adjust the direction of the lesson when necessary.

- In mathematics, teachers give appropriate attention to developing students' calculation skills and their ability to consider different approaches to problems. They encourage students to explain and justify their ideas, and thereby deepen their understanding. Teachers ensure that students learn how to identify their errors for themselves and learn from their mistakes. Students were observed applying mathematical skills such as data analysis effectively in other subjects. Across the school, students are making progress which is almost invariably good or better.
- In English, teachers' highly effective questioning skills encourage students to extend their understanding and appreciate differences in the interpretation of a wide range of literary texts. Reading is promoted particularly strongly, and teachers place a strong emphasis on students reading silently at the start of English lessons. They focus appropriately on developing the phonic skills of those whose reading is not yet secure. There is a fine library and students receive every encouragement to read fiction, with the result that many take books home.
- In most subjects, teachers pay careful attention to ensuring accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. They use technical terms correctly, and emphasise their importance to students. Homework tasks are interesting and generally set with appropriate frequency, and overall make a good contribution to students' learning. At Key Stage 4 in particular, teachers encourage students to make use of commercial educational websites to reinforce their skills and close any gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers provide well for disabled students and those who have special educational needs because teachers know how to provide work that is appropriate to these students' different starting points. Leaders make sure that each individual's needs are carefully assessed and checked.
- In the few lessons, some students make slower progress when they are taught by inexperienced or temporary teachers. On these occasions, the work set is not always sufficiently well matched to students' prior learning.
- Almost all the books seen by inspectors had been marked regularly. Most met the school's expectation that staff offer individual guidance on how students can improve their work, and check that students then have acted on this advice. However, this was not consistently the case and, in a small minority of classes, the guidance was too general to promote improvements.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students' achievement has improved rapidly this academic year, although improvement is less marked in the sixth form, particularly at advanced level. Students who left in 2014 started Year 7 with attainment that was average. According to the published results, they left the main school with attainment that was broadly average, but well below average in English. However, the English data reflect the particular combination of English subjects for which the majority of students were entered, which did not follow the pattern assumed by the official datasets used in national comparisons. Results in the English examination actually taken by the majority of students were broadly in line with the averages for this specific course.
- The rate at which students make progress has increased rapidly this academic year. In 2014, the published results show that the proportion of students that made expected progress and the proportion that exceeded expected progress in English were below the national average. In mathematics, the proportion that made expected progress was broadly in line with averages whilst the proportion that exceeded expected progress was below average. Data supplied by the school indicate that all these proportions will be higher in 2015, and this is confirmed both by inspection evidence and by independent reviews commissioned by the school.
- In the large majority of lessons across the school, current students make good progress in lessons. A further scrutiny of work from Year 7, Year 8 and Year 10 conducted by inspectors shows a similar picture. In almost all subjects, the work students are set is generally challenging and accurately graded, and represents progress from the start of the academic year which is at or above that expected. Improvement has been particularly rapid in English and technology.

- According to the published results, disadvantaged students left the school in 2014 with attainment two thirds of a grade on average above other students in English and a grade below in mathematics. Compared with students nationally, they were four grades behind in English, and one and a third grades behind in mathematics. School data show that disadvantaged students are now making good progress and attainment gaps with students nationally are closing rapidly, especially in English.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because leaders identify their individual learning needs precisely and staff build carefully on what students can already do.
- The school has supported the achievement of students who join the school with below average attainment well. Leaders have used the Year 7 'catch-up' funding to provide specialist phonics and mathematics teaching and this has led to improved progress for this group in English and mathematics. Improvements in reading have been impressive, with the reading age of each member of the cohort advancing a year beyond their chronological age.
- In the large majority of lessons, the most-able students achieve well. They respond particularly well when work is appropriately challenging, as it mostly is. The work scrutinised by inspectors and the school's information show that progress of the most-able students is increasing. However, in a small minority of lessons, the most-able students are expected to complete too much routine work before beginning tasks which really stretch them. This slows their progress.
- The school does not use early entry for GCSE examinations.
- The very small number of students undertaking work-related courses are making good progress in acquiring the technical knowledge and skill required for employment. They are on track to attain the main qualification for which they are studying, as well as GCSEs in English and mathematics.
- The very small number of students attending the Key Stage 3 fixed-term alternative provision are making good progress in addressing the social and emotional difficulties that present a barrier to their academic progress.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- The sixth form provision is improving, but is not yet good. It has taken rather longer to establish good leadership and to tackle the legacy of weak teaching and corresponding underachievement in the sixth form than has been the case in the main school.
- The sixth form currently draws almost all its students from the main school. The attainment of students when they join has generally been below average. A large majority follow academic courses, and the entry profile for their attainment for those taking A level courses has often been below that seen nationally.
- In 2014, the progress of students on several academic courses was below average, and progress on the smaller number of vocational courses was slightly above average. However, the progress of current students, witnessed by inspectors, was uniformly good or outstanding. This confirms the school's data indicating that progress and attainment are expected to rise in 2015, especially at AS level. At A2 level, students are on track to better the performance of their peers in 2014, but nevertheless are set to make a little less than expected progress.
- In 2014, the school met the 16 to 19 interim minimum standards. The progress of the few disadvantaged students is broadly in line with that of their peers. All those students who have not already attained a good grade in GCSE English or mathematics are required to study the subject and retake the examination. In November 2014, a very high proportion of those who retook mathematics secured a grade C or better.
- Teaching, especially since the start of this academic year is improving but has not been consistently good enough in all subjects to enable all students, particularly those taking advanced courses, to achieve as well as they should. Increasingly, however, teaching shows evidence of teachers' skilful questioning and

their confident mastery of subject knowledge and terminology. The marking provides clear and specific guidance on how students can improve their work.

- The behaviour and safety of students are generally good. Students' approach to their studies is mature and responsible, and they demonstrate strong attitudes to learning in lessons. Students work collaboratively when given the opportunity and display perseverance and self-confidence when the work they are given is challenging. They rightly believe that the sixth form represents a safe environment, but think that the school has not done enough to develop their broader personal and social skills, or prepare those who are considering it, for apprenticeship or employment. Nevertheless, a high proportion of students stay on to complete their studies and then progress onto their chosen destinations post school.
- New leaders have already acted to track students' progress more rigorously, and to provide a broader programme of non-qualification activities. They are currently arranging a conference designed to raise students' awareness of their options offered by different universities, employment and apprenticeships. They have increased the opportunities for sixth form students to involve themselves in the wider life of the school, and to work with students from other schools in the trust. However, take-up of these and other sporting and cultural activities is currently patchy.

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	139936
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	450245

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1103
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	130
Appropriate authority	The Griffin Schools Trust
Chair	Phillip Clark
Acting Headteacher	Alison Ramsay
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	02476 312308
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