

John Whitgift Academy

Crosland Road, Grimsby, Lincolnshire, DN37 9EH

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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

- Students' attainment and progress in mathematics lag behind other subjects.
- Some low ability students do not make the progress expected of them across a range of subjects.
- Teachers do not always give students work that will stretch them. They do not pay enough attention to making sure students of different abilities work as hard as they can.
- Students do not act on the comments teachers write on their work so they continue to make the same mistakes. They do not always try to think things through for themselves.
- The number of students who are persistently absent from school is not reducing quickly enough.
- Students' handwriting and presentation of their work is untidy. Their writing skills and mathematical skills are not improving at a fast enough pace.
- The information subject leaders gather about the quality of teaching and students' work is not always used effectively to bring about rapid improvement.
- Leaders' development planning is not precise enough about how improvements will be checked and what they expect to see at interim checks.

The school has the following strengths

- Students' attainment and progress, including in English, are improving because teaching is getting better.
- Leaders, with the support of governors and the academy's partner, have tackled inadequate teaching with vigour.
- There is a purposeful ethos in the academy and teachers are responding well to leaders' high expectations.
- Students have warm relationships with their teachers. Their conduct in classrooms and around the campus is calm and sociable.
- Attendance of most students is improving and the number of fixed-term exclusions is reducing.
- The academy's trust partner is providing well-judged and effective support to teachers and leaders.
- Governors have made sure the pupil premium funding is spent wisely and, consequently, disadvantaged students are catching up quickly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 parts of lessons and checked students' work in books. Three lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions were held with the Principal, staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the academy's trust partners.
- The inspectors spoke to students in lessons, at break and during lunchtimes. They also spoke formally to two groups of students.
- One inspector heard students read as part of their lesson.
- The inspection team observed the academy's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the academy's plans for the future and on-going reviews of those plans. They also looked at behaviour logs, records of racist incidents and the academy's safeguarding arrangements.
- Two inspectors toured the academy with students.
- Inspectors took into account 18 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors took account of 33 responses to the staff inspection survey.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the academy's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Joan Hewitt, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lynne Selkirk

Additional Inspector

David Woodhouse

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than the average secondary school.
- The proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are well below the national figures.
- The proportion of students who are eligible for support through the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those children of service families) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of students registered as disabled or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average, as is the number of students supported at school action plus.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is also above the national average.
- The school has alternative provision arrangements with the local authority's behaviour and attendance collaborative. Currently, students are attending Action for Employment, Playsport, Park House, Western Study Plus, The Motor Project, CPO Media and The Young People's Support Service. There are 11 students attending these provisions.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better across all subjects by:
 - making sure teachers use students' targets and progress checks to plan work at the right level for students of different abilities
 - raising teachers' expectations of the quality of work students of all abilities can do, especially the least able and students on school action and school action plus
 - ensuring teachers give students time to respond to the written comments on their work
 - making sure teachers give students plenty of opportunities to think things through for themselves.
- Improve students' progress so that it is consistently good and raise attainment in line with the national average, especially in mathematics by:
 - improving students' writing and presentation skills
 - improving students' basic mathematical skills and providing opportunities for them to apply these in subjects other than mathematics.
- Continue to improve students' attendance and reduce the number of students who are persistently absent so that it is in line with the national average.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
 - adjusting the academy's development plan to include details of what success will look like at interim checks
 - ensuring middle leaders are consistently effective in using the information they collect about the quality of teaching and students' work to secure improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' achievement is improving. The number of students gaining five good grades at GCSE including English and mathematics rose sharply last year. Standards remain below the national average. The academy's reliable internal data show that results for the current Year 11 are likely to be much closer to the national picture.
- Low ability students do not do as well and a number do not make enough progress in English and mathematics. There are also gaps in the progress made by students who are supported through school action and at school action plus compared with other groups of students. However, these are closing steadily and the academy's work to promote equality and tackle discrimination is sound. Disabled students, those who have a statement for their special educational needs and the most able fare better and they make progress broadly in line with that expected of them.
- Students' achievements in mathematics have not improved at the same rate as in English and results were disappointing last year. This was partly because the academy entered a large number of students early for GCSE mathematics and, for a significant number, this had a detrimental effect because they did not make as much progress as they should.
- The progress made by students who attend alternative provision is variable. Some are making good progress and they are on track to achieve appropriate qualifications and skills but, equally, others are making weaker progress. The academy is reviewing how they place students and improving their checks on the quality of placements.
- Improvements in students' progress are gathering pace, especially in Key Stage 3. Students for whom the pupil premium provides support are making better progress than they have in the past. For example, in 2012 in English and mathematics, these students lagged behind other students by almost a whole grade at GCSE and this has reduced to roughly half a grade. The academy has secured this improvement by funding smaller class sizes and providing well-judged extra support in small groups. Consequently, the academy is giving disadvantaged students a fair chance to succeed.
- The reading skills of most students are improving and they also speak confidently when they are answering teachers' questions.
- Students' writing skills are underdeveloped, particularly for low and middle ability students. Many do not take enough care with their handwriting or with the presentation of their work. Sometimes writing is done on sheets of paper and it is frequently dog-eared and crumpled. Students' presentation of graphs and charts are equally as haphazard, often sketched in pen without using rulers. This lack of precision carries on in their mathematics books and this leads to errors.
- Students generally want to do well and complete the work teachers set for them. However, they often lack the confidence to think things through for themselves. They sometimes seek teachers' help too readily before giving a difficult task a really good go.
- The Year 7 'catch up' funding has been used effectively to provide an intensive literacy catch-up programme and small-group work in mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is improving steadily and there are examples of good and outstanding teaching. However, this is inconsistent so students do not routinely make good progress. Students say teaching has got better over the last year or so and captures their interest more often, making them think about different cultures and moral dilemmas.
- Students' attitudes are usually positive and their good relationships with their teachers and other adults contribute to their learning. The most able students are generally well motivated and seek to do their best. However, less able and middle ability students tend to lack confidence and

teachers do not always expect enough of them.

- Where teachers have high expectations, students respond very positively and they tackle the work with gusto. For example, Year 7 students made good progress in composing melodies because the teacher was skilful in encouraging them to take risks and praised them for trying something difficult and learning from their mistakes.
- Teachers have plenty of information about students' targets and their current achievement but they do not always use it to make sure students of different abilities make fast progress. Consequently, some students do not have work that is hard enough because they work at the same pace as others who are finding the task more difficult.
- Teachers' marking is usually thorough and gives students helpful tips on how they can improve their work. This takes a great deal of time and effort, however, teachers do not follow this up by making sure students act on the advice and this leads to students repeating their mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. This is because some students, particularly low and middle ability students, rely on teachers helping them too much and consequently they have not developed a real love and thirst for learning.
- Students look after the academy and there is little in the way of litter. Behaviour in the canteen is calm and students queue in an orderly way to collect their food. They spend lunchtimes and breaks chatting with their friends. The atmosphere is friendly and students do not hesitate to greet visitors and offer to show them around.
- Students wear their uniform smartly and there are few occasions when teachers have to ask for shirts to be tucked in, hats removed or top buttons fastened.
- Students have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including racist comments and homophobia. They have faith in adults to take action if they report an incident and they say they feel safe. Staff are vigilant in logging incidents of poor behaviour and analyse this regularly.
- Exclusions are reducing but some groups of students, such as boys and those students who are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, are excluded more often than others.
- Students' attendance has improved recently and it is now closer to the national average after being low for several years. The numbers of students who are regularly absent has fallen because of the dogged persistence of staff in helping students overcoming their difficulties. Nevertheless, this is still high in comparison with the national picture. For this reason, the school's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The Principal, capably supported by other leaders, governors and the academy's trust partner, is bringing about improvements in students' achievement, behaviour and attendance. They are aware of the long journey ahead of them and improvements are gathering pace but remain inconsistent. For example, mathematics is not improving as quickly as English.
- The experienced Principal is tackling the challenges the academy faces with vigour. His refreshing candour is proving to be an asset in developing a changed culture in the academy. He is swift to acknowledge weaknesses and take action and equally swift in praising staff and students for a job well done.
- The academy's plans for development require improvement. Leaders have identified the right priorities and times when they will check on the progress they are making. However, it is not clear exactly what improvement will look like at interim checks. This makes it difficult for subject leaders to understand precisely what they are checking and this leads to inconsistencies in the quality of their work. Middle leaders are conscientious about gathering information about the quality of teaching and students' work in their area. Some use this information well to secure improvements quickly but this is not consistent.

- The Principal, governors and other leaders have taken robust action to eliminate inadequate teaching and this has led to some staffing difficulties. Leaders have held their nerve, insisting on recruiting teachers of the right quality even when this has resulted in several attempts to recruit. The academy's trust partners have also supported effectively by seconding capable staff from other academies.
- The academy offers a reasonable range of subjects for students to follow. Recent improvements are helping to improve students' reading. Leaders are working on helping teachers in all subjects to improve students' literacy skills but this has not had enough impact on improving students' writing. Leaders are acutely aware that there is still much to do in improving students' mathematical skills across different subjects.
- The academy's trust partner visits the academy regularly and provides valuable support and challenge to the school to ensure improvements are sustained. For example, he has helped leaders to review the courses available to make sure they suit students' needs and aspirations.
- There are sensible procedures to link experienced teachers' and leaders' pay to their effectiveness. Leaders and governors have not shied away from withholding progression where performance has been below par. Currently, arrangements to link the pay of less experienced teachers to the progress of students in their care are less rigorous but this is being reviewed by the academy's trust partners.
- Music, humanities and drama all contribute to students' strong social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. This is further enhanced by a range of trips and visits. The only fly in the ointment is the lack of confidence of some students in getting to grips with difficult work without asking for help too soon.
- The academy has not sought support from the local authority since converting to an academy. The Principal has attended network meetings and the academy uses the local authority behaviour and attendance collaborative to provide alternative education placements. These have been variable in quality and some students have not made sufficient progress. Governors and leaders are sceptical about the quality of the local authority's monitoring of these placements. Local authority representatives meet regularly with the academy's trust partner and this is used effectively to keep the authority appraised of how well students are doing throughout the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors keep a careful eye on the work of the academy. They have developed a sharper approach to holding leaders accountable for the quality of the work in their areas. They have a reasonable grasp of the academy's strengths and the areas it needs to improve.
 - They know what the pupil premium funding is spent on and check that it is being used effectively to improve the progress of disadvantaged students.
 - Governors regularly check that safeguarding requirements are met and they keep a close eye on attendance and exclusions.
 - They have improved the work they do in engaging parents by establishing a forum for parents to discuss issues affecting the academy. They have also established an attendance panel which has helped to reduce the number of students who are persistently absent.

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	137464
Local authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	430897

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	524
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Vessey
Principal	Mark Rushby
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2012
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