

Tudor Grange Academy Worcester

Inspection report

Unique reference number	135913
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	381962
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2012
Lead inspector	Kevin Sheldrick HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
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	867
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Rock
Headteacher	Claire Maclean (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
School address	Bilford Road Worcester WR3 8HN
Telephone number	01905 454627
Fax number	01905 459517
Email address	cmaclean@tgaw.org.uk

Age group	11–18
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kevin Sheldrick

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jane Woodall

Additional inspector

David Turner

Additional inspector

Joseph Skivington

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed 36 hours of lessons taught by 34 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at communications with parents and carers, assessment information and the school's development planning. The questionnaires from students, staff and 68 parents and carers were scrutinised.

Information about the school

The Tudor Grange Academy Worcester is a smaller than the average-sized secondary school although student numbers are rising. It came into existence in September 2009 following the closure of the Elgar School. This school was in Special Measures at the time of its closure. Sixth form provision commenced in September 2010. In order to increase the courses available to students the academy works in partnership with five other providers. The principal is new to the academy but the majority of other staff transferred from the predecessor school. New school buildings are currently being constructed. The academy is sponsored by the Tudor Grange Academy in Solihull.

The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is well above average. A below-average proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. This includes some who speak English as an additional language. The school meets the current floor standards.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory
- Achievement is satisfactory. Attainment is low but the academy is ensuring a rapid rate of improvement so this gap is closing rapidly.
- Although teaching over time is satisfactory students are now experiencing a majority of lessons that are good and an increasing number that are outstanding.
- Behaviour is satisfactory and it has improved greatly since the academy opened.
- The improvements to achievement, teaching and behaviour are striking and confirm that the school has a good capacity for improvement and that leadership and management are good.
- The school’s leaders have very successfully established much higher expectations throughout the academy. The high quality feedback that teachers provide is ensuring that students know what to do to achieve their challenging targets.
- Improved teaching is ensuring students enjoy learning more although a small minority continue to have less positive attitudes to learning.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of what is needed to further improve the academy. For instance, they have recognised that to make teaching outstanding lessons need to be better adapted to meet the needs of different groups within lessons.
- Students do not always have sufficient opportunity to discuss their ideas.
- Leaders have also identified that to further improve the attitudes of a small minority it needs to further enhance its partnerships, particularly with parents.
- Although improving, exclusions and attendance are not yet in line with national averages.
- The new sixth form has started well and it effectively complementing other post 16 provision that is available locally. The overall effectiveness of this phase is satisfactory.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching outstanding by:

- ensuring groups of students in lessons are able to undertake tasks that are matched to their needs
 - focusing teachers' time in lessons on those groups that require most support
 - ensuring all lessons include questioning that requires all students to talk about their ideas related to the concepts being taught
 - enhancing the opportunities students have to take make choices in their work within lessons so they can concentrate even more on the aspects they find challenging and move more quickly to the next level
 - further increase student involvement in self/peer assessment using a range of assessment criteria
- Develop the effectiveness of partnerships, particularly with parents and carers, in order to
- enhance the attitudes to learning of the minority of students who are at risk of exclusion
 - decrease absences so attendance of all groups is at least at the national average.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

On opening in September 2009 students' attainment was very low and the students' progress inadequate. It remains low but has improved strongly since the academy opened. The proportion of students gaining 5A* to C including English and mathematics has risen sharply and evidence suggests further substantial improvements. This is largely due to much better teaching. In lessons students make good progress and many examples were seen of teachers successfully plugging gaps in students' previous learning. Results in the last two years indicate that the progress made in improving attainment in English and mathematics has not been quite as strong as has been the case in other subjects. However, inspectors' observations provided compelling evidence that this situation has been successfully addressed, particularly in English. Parents, carers and especially students indicated that achievement has greatly improved since the academy opened.

In the sixth form students make satisfactory progress. Strengths in curriculum design are ensuring better outcomes, particularly for those who might not have continued in education post-16.

When the academy opened very large gaps existed in the achievement of different groups. Boys, students eligible for free school meals and students who are disabled or have special needs all progressed at an even lower rate compared to other students. Improved provision is transforming this situation so these gaps are being rapidly reduced. The effective use of teaching assistants, particularly outside of lessons, has been instrumental in ensuring better outcomes for students with special educational needs. This includes effective strategies aimed at improving the reading of all students with low reading ages.

Quality of teaching

Teachers have higher expectations of students, reflected in more challenging GCSE targets being adopted in all year groups. Marking is consistently enabling students to appreciate their achievements and how to attain the next grade. Generally, teachers are becoming more skilled at engaging students in learning. Interesting and relevant starting points are often identified that immediately involve learners. New technologies are often used well to provide students with deeper insights into learning. For instance, students in mathematics lessons were able to very quickly and clearly demonstrate to the whole class the method they used to solve a problem of how much paint would be required to cover a tank.

Teachers' questioning skills vary but some excellent practice was observed. This included a science lesson that actively involved students in an enjoyable simulation that demonstrated the properties of waves. The teacher very effectively probed students understanding, often identifying emerging misconceptions so these could be effectively challenged. In an English lesson involving the analysis of a Dickens' character, the teacher's questioning helped students communicate very well quite sophisticated ideas to the rest of the class. The opportunities students have to use assessment criteria to evaluate their work and identify improvements are gradually increasing. Despite this effective practice, examples were also seen of less effective questioning. At times teachers' desire to ensure more rapid progress leads them to dominate rather than using questions to explore understanding. In a minority of lessons, there is not sufficient emphasis on developing students' abilities to communicate their ideas. Although expectations in lessons are much higher, relatively few examples were seen of tasks aimed at specific groups of students. In addition students do not have sufficient opportunity to make choices in their work so they can concentrate on challenging tasks.

Although a majority of lessons observed were good and a growing minority outstanding, this more positive picture is relatively recent. Over time teaching has not been as effective, making achievement satisfactory. The impact of teaching over time was reflected in the evidence inspectors found relating to the quality of learning. A minority of students still possess less positive attitudes which explain occasional instances of low-level disruption that detract from learning and the above average levels of exclusion. Despite these shortcomings the school is very effectively promoting student's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Year 11 students showed a commendable desire to find out more about different cultures. A history lesson was greatly enhanced because the spiritual dimension was promoted when students were required to make a personal response to their findings related to the Vietnam war.

Students with special educational needs are making much better progress because their needs are being more accurately identified and teaching assistants are being more effectively held to account for the progress their students make. Sixth formers are also benefiting from the improvements to teaching. Parents, carers and students recognise that substantial improvements have been made to teaching.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students are well behaved, polite and considerate around the school and in the large

majority of lessons. Students are proud of their new uniforms and approve of the high expectations of their behaviour. Students, parents and carers confirmed that behaviour has improved greatly. It is managed well by the large majority of teachers. The academy recognises that there is more to do in successfully changing the attitudes of a small minority of students and their parents and carers. This is slowing the progress the academy is making in reducing exclusions and absences. Attendance is below average although it has improved considerably. The academy focuses well on different groups and it is improving the attendance of the students that have previously been persistently absent and other groups that have traditionally not attended well. Behaviour has been improved because the curriculum is better adapted to meet the needs of students. For instance, students can choose from a wide range of courses from Year 8 onwards.

Bullying has reduced, including any that are based on aspects of prejudice because the academy has rigorously identified incidents. Only rarely is bullying not dealt with to the satisfaction of students, parents and carers. Some younger students spoke of being made to feel uncomfortable at times because of the inconsiderate behaviour of a small minority of older students. Students spoke very positively about the range of people they can speak to about concerns, including sixth formers. Punctuality to lessons is good.

The curriculum provides students with many opportunities to consider safety. In science, construction and public service lessons students were observed to be taking appropriate actions to ensure the safety of themselves and others around them. Sixth formers manage well the need to work in wide range of different learning environments

Leadership and management

The academy's leaders acted quickly to ensure much higher expectations were adopted. The new uniform, fresh flowers on the dining room tables and the high quality new building are all symbols of the way in which leaders are transforming the learning community. Students, parents and carers overwhelmingly approve of the high standards that are expected.

Students are experiencing a greatly improved curriculum because leaders quickly adapted the curriculum models from the sponsor academy. Students of all abilities are more motivated by the range of courses. The weekly skills, action and service sessions, undertaken and enjoyed by all, greatly enhance students social, moral and cultural development.

Senior leaders very successfully prioritised making improvements to teaching. Teaching was inadequate when the academy opened but is now close to being good. This sharp improvement is a result of good teamwork led by subject leaders, highly effective professional development and a willingness to tackle under-performance. Senior staff have minimised the impact of staffing problems, particularly in mathematics where they quickly recognised the potential of younger members of staff to provide leadership. The effective steps being taken to close the gaps in the performance of different groups is proof that the school is effectively promoting equal opportunities. The constant emphasis on attaining challenging targets and

carefully targeted mentoring has been highly instrumental in bringing about these improvements. The priority given to those students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, when developing post 16 provision, is further confirmation of strong commitment to equal opportunities.

The academy is working hard in developing partnerships, particularly with primary schools. This recognises that more needs to be done to involve parents and carers in supporting the development of more positive attitudes to learning. The arrangements for safeguarding meet government requirements and the introduction of all age tutor groups has contributed to students feeling safe. The governing body has been instrumental in the sponsorship arrangements that have increased the academy’s capacity for improvement.

Leaders of the sixth form have acted quickly to deal with the inevitable teething issues associated with a new sixth form. Better guidance arrangements are now ensuring students are placed on appropriate courses. A strategic plan exists that clearly sets out an agenda for continued developments, reflecting the good capacity to sustain improvement.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils’ needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that

inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 February 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Tudor Grange Academy Worcester, Worcester, WR3 8HN

I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently and for such a good response to the questionnaire. A special thank you goes to those of you who we interviewed, for your important comments that helped inform our judgements.

We decided that the overall effectiveness of your school is satisfactory largely because your attainment is not yet at the national average. You told us that you think the academy has improved greatly since it opened. We agreed with you on this. Teaching is much better so you are making much faster progress. This is why the examination results in 2011 were the best ever. Most of you meet the high expectations of good behaviour. We were highly impressed with your academy's leaders who have brought rapid progress.

However, there are occasional shortcomings in behaviour in lessons and some younger students are made to feel uncomfortable by the inconsiderate actions of small minority of older students. We were impressed that you know your challenging targets and are expected to work at a higher level in lessons. We found that you experience a lot of teaching that is good and some that is outstanding. Teachers are ensuring more of you enjoy lessons and they almost always give you helpful feedback so that you know what to do to improve further. In the more effective lessons teachers are ensuring you have plenty of opportunity to discuss your ideas. Where teaching was less effective we thought that you should have more opportunity to make choices so you could concentrate on those aspects you find most challenging. To improve further, we have asked the academy to improve this aspect and to ensure that more lessons require you to discuss your ideas. You can help by being willing to share you ideas and by choosing the most challenging work that is available to you. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick
Her Majesty's Inspector

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