

Goole High School Academy of Excellence

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 137316 |
| Local authority | Not applicable |
| Inspection number | 385676 |
| Inspection dates | 20–21 September 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Joan McKenna |

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

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|--|-------------------------------------|
| 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 | 1,010 |
| Of which number on roll in the sixth form | 98 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Trevor Langton |
| Headteacher | Danuta Tomasz |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Centenary Road Goole DN14 6AN |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They observed 39 lessons taught by 29 staff, shorter visits to classrooms were made and observations of other activities took place. Meetings were held with the headteacher, associate headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and groups of students. Inspectors observed the academy's work and scrutinised documents including policies, action plans, information about students' learning and progress and about arrangements for safeguarding and attendance data. Responses to questionnaires returned by students, staff and the 28 returned by parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether students' attainment is high enough at the end of Key Stage 4, and whether the learning, progress and achievement of all groups of students across the academy, including in the sixth form, are at least satisfactory?
- Whether action being taken to improve attendance and to reduce persistent absence is having sufficient impact?
- Whether any areas of the academy's work are outstanding, as it judges to be the case?
- Whether the academy, including the sixth form, is improving at a fast enough rate?

Information about the school

This slightly above-average-sized secondary school converted to an academy in August 2011. Most students are of White British heritage, although the proportions of students from minority ethnic heritages and whose first language is not English are increasing. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well-above the national average and higher than in recent years. There are 98 students in the sixth form which is shared with another school and housed on a separate site. The academy holds the Investors In People award, the gold award for information, advice and guidance and has Healthy Schools status. It is a Creative Partnerships School, a designated Microsoft Academy and is a Future Leaders training school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory academy. It has strengths in pastoral aspects, and good-quality care, guidance and support contribute to students' personal outcomes being mainly good. Their academic achievement is satisfactory and improving. The headteacher and associate headteacher are very ambitious for the academy and its students and their determination is shared by other leaders. Strengths and weakness are well known, with innovative strategies aimed at securing greater success adopted. These are having a positive impact and are bringing about improvement, although not yet at a fast rate in all areas. Nevertheless, the gains made to date indicate a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

The academy values its students and provides the support individuals need to be able to benefit from the provision made for them, including, for example, through its newly revised mentoring arrangements which ensure personalised attention for all. Extra, well-tailored and effective support is given to those with additional needs or who are vulnerable in any way. Students respond well to the academy's high expectations of them. Their behaviour and relationships with each other are good. They feel safe in the academy and make a strong contribution to it. However, attendance, although rising, remains low despite efforts to improve it.

Students enter the academy with below average attainment. Although attainment remains below average at the end of Key Stage 4, including in English and mathematics, it is rising across the academy and is average or close to it on some measures. Students' learning and progress are satisfactory and improving, although there is some variability across different groups and subjects. Teaching is also satisfactory. Some is good, but its quality is not yet consistent. Students' progress is tracked regularly but the resulting information is not yet used fully by all teachers to ensure work is at the right level of challenge for all, or to ensure that all students know their targets and how to reach them. The range of courses on offer and the organisation of the curriculum have been developed to ensure that students' different needs are being more appropriately and effectively met. The sixth form is in a state of transition, with a review of post-16 provision and its links with Key Stage 4 underway. While outcomes for sixth form students are satisfactory overall, there is variability in effectiveness across courses.

The academy is taking a range of steps to promote partnership with parents and carers. However, despite success in some areas, not all parents and carers are yet engaging actively and positively with it.

Up to 40% of the 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?

- Raise students' attainment, especially in English and mathematics, and ensure that all groups, including those in the sixth form, make good progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers use data and targets consistently to ensure appropriately high levels of challenge for all students
 - using strategies that engage students' interest and promote their active, independent learning consistently well in lessons
 - ensuring that all students understand how well they are doing, what their targets are and how to reach them, and that marking provides detailed feedback and guidance on these issues
 - ensuring that the range of courses in the sixth form meets the full range of students' needs.
- Continue efforts to raise attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism so that all groups of students attend the academy regularly enough and overall figures are at least in line with the national averages.
- Take further steps to improve the extent to which parents and carers work in active partnership with the academy by:
 - establishing effective two-way channels of communication between parents and carers and the academy
 - providing more opportunities for parents and carers to become involved in the life of the academy and encouraging them to take up these opportunities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

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|----------|
| 3 |
|----------|

Students generally are keen to learn, do as they are asked and try hard with their work. This is particularly the case when teaching is good because it results in them being more interested and motivated. Some readily take part in class discussions, volunteering answers and offering opinions, but this is not the case for all and some lack the confidence to do so, even when being actively encouraged to participate. Most students respond well to teachers' expectations of their conduct and approach to learning but, occasionally, some do not, especially when teaching is less strong and in those lessons where expectations are not made clear enough in the first place or are not reinforced when required. Students enjoy opportunities to work with

others and most do so maturely and productively, although some need specific support to enable them to do so sensibly.

Attainment reaches the national average on some measures by the end of Key Stage 4, such as the proportion of students gaining five good GCSE passes. However, this is not the case when English and mathematics are taken into account, although the 2011 results were above the floor targets set by the government. Attainment is still below average overall and, in 2011, the legacy of earlier underachievement for that group of Year 11 students was not fully compensated for. However, Year 9 and Year 10 students who sat some GCSE examinations last year gained some results that were higher than those in Year 11, indicating that standards are rising. The progress of different groups of students and in different subjects is variable but it is improving, especially at Key Stage 3 where it was a weakness at the last inspection. Increasingly, and overall, the learning and progress of most students across the academy are satisfactory and action to reduce gaps between groups, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is a priority for the academy.

Students enjoy being members of the academy and talk positively about the changes they have seen, both in recent times and since the change in status. Some, for example, mentioned being supportive of the stricter approach to discipline which they said has improved behaviour and hence the climate for learning within lessons. They appreciate what the academy provides for them, citing the number of extra-curricular activities and trips as examples. Students' participation in the wide range of opportunities for them to get involved in different activities means that many make a very positive contribution within the academy and beyond, such as through being student and sports leaders and eco-busters. They respect each other and reported cases of bullying or racial incidents are low. Students have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy and can assess risks and dangers. Attendance is rising and is average and above for some students, but it is not improving rapidly enough for all individuals and groups, and, despite a considerable drop persistent absence is still high. Exclusions have declined and are low.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 4 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

There is some good-quality teaching within the academy and in these lessons expectations are high and are regularly reinforced, planning takes account of students' different needs, skilful questions probe and develop their understanding and lessons are reshaped based on an assessment of students' learning to ensure progress is brisk. Students are encouraged to be actively involved and are given time to apply their knowledge and develop understanding through independent and group work. Teaching is satisfactory overall, however, because not all lessons have enough of these characteristics. In particular, not all teachers are using the data available to them about students' prior learning to plan specifically enough for their different needs or to ensure that work has the right level of challenge for all. Occasionally, students are not given opportunities to be actively involved and are required to be passive for too long. In some subjects students know their targets and are given precise information about how to reach them. In others, students do not know what they are aiming for. The marking of work is variable, and in some books poorly presented work goes unchallenged, with insufficient feedback and guidance given.

Raising students' aspirations and increasing their engagement and success have been at the heart of curriculum development. A wider range of pathways, courses, opportunities for accreditation and timings of examinations mean that it is now more tailored to the needs of individuals. These are strong features. Their impact on improving learning is starting to be seen, but it is too early for it to be fully reflected in improved attainment. Further attention is due to be given to developing students' literacy skills in particular. Progression routes into post-16 education are also under review. Good attention is also paid to promoting students' wider development, such as their financial awareness and understanding of health and safety, and enrichment opportunities are good. There is high uptake of the extensive extra-curricular programme.

Students say that some of the best things about the academy are the way they are cared for, the support they are given and the fact that 'we are not forgotten about at 4pm'. The newly revised and innovative mentoring scheme draws on most adults within the academy to provide personalised attention to small groups of students. Additional, specialist provision provides helpful, extra support for students who are vulnerable due to their circumstances, such as through the units for students at risk of exclusion or who need support with their learning. Related record keeping is appropriately detailed but is not always organised in the most accessible way.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 3 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The determination of the headteacher and the associate headteacher to improve the academy sets a clear direction for its community. Almost all staff have a leadership responsibility and are regarded as having a part to play in promoting progress. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements are thorough and result in identification of the right priorities for action, currently centring on improving teaching and using assessment information to escalate students' progress. However, some of the judgements the academy made about itself were more positive than the inspection team's, partly because they gave more emphasis to the improvements that have been made as opposed where more are needed or possible. Nevertheless, strengths and weaknesses are accurately understood.

The governing body carries out its role with commitment but acknowledges that it is a state of transition with respect to the new academy status and resulting responsibilities. It does provide challenge, but this aspect of its work is not yet fully comprehensive or rigorous.

Procedures to keep students safe meet requirements. Staff are well trained in child protection matters and students feel safe and well protected. Equal opportunities are promoted well and discrimination is not tolerated. The academy analyses how different groups are performing and is taking action to narrow any gaps. Actions to promote community cohesion are underway, with a strong contribution made within the local area, but with less emphasis on a wider front.

A broad range of effective partnerships with external organisations help to meet students' academic and pastoral needs. However, efforts to work in close partnership with parents and carers have not yet met with full success. The school has introduced some new ways of communicating with them which are appreciated, but not all yet feel that their views are sought and some do not approach the school readily with their concerns.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 3 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Sixth form

The sixth form is in transition with interim leadership arrangements, pending the outcomes of a review of 14-19 provision within the academy. Although the current range of courses and levels of accreditation have been broadened to better meet students’ needs, it has been identified that they do not do so fully. Nevertheless, the wider range of applied and vocational courses is providing access to post-16 education for some students who might not otherwise do so, and is raising aspirations and increasing motivation.

Standards vary across different subjects and courses, as do rates of progress, and while they are not strong enough in all cases, overall and taking into account the impact on students’ personal development, outcomes are satisfactory. Teaching is conscientious and provides students with the subject knowledge they need to have and familiarisation with examination requirements. In the more effective lessons students’ understanding is promoted through practical activities and independent work and attention is given to developing their confidence. Overall, however, the range of strategies used is too narrow and the passivity shown by many students is not challenged sufficiently.

Students say they enjoy their time in the sixth form and they speak highly of their teachers, although not all attend regularly enough. Because the sixth form is small, students are well known and they receive personalised support and guidance. The frequency with which their progress is tracked has increased recently. However, while the sixth form functions smoothly on a day-to-day basis, monitoring and evaluation and the strategic analysis of outcomes and resulting action are currently underdeveloped.

These are the grades for the sixth form

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the sixth Form | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form | 3 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form | 3 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

The response rate from parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire was much lower than that normally seen. Of those returned, most responses were positive. There is other evidence within the academy which shows that some parents and carers hold positive views about it but also that a very small minority are negative about some aspects of its work. Inspection evidence shows that the school’s effectiveness is satisfactory overall, and that there are good features to its work, including in pastoral areas where provision and outcomes are positive.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Goole High School Academy of Excellence to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received **28** completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,010 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 13 | 46 | 13 | 46 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 16 | 57 | 11 | 39 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 11 | 39 | 14 | 50 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 8 | 29 | 14 | 50 | 5 | 18 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 8 | 29 | 16 | 57 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 6 | 21 | 16 | 57 | 4 | 14 | 1 | 4 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 11 | 39 | 14 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 12 | 43 | 12 | 43 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 10 | 36 | 14 | 50 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 10 | 36 | 13 | 46 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 7 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 8 | 29 | 11 | 39 | 5 | 18 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 9 | 32 | 14 | 50 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 4 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 10 | 36 | 14 | 50 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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 | 43 | 47 | 10 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 46 | 42 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 36 | 41 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 42 | 41 | 3 |
| Special schools | 30 | 48 | 19 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 14 | 50 | 31 | 5 |
| All schools | 10 | 44 | 39 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| 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. |

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.



22 September 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Goole High School Academy of Excellence, Goole, DN14 6AN

Thank you for being so welcoming when my colleagues and I inspected your academy this week. We enjoyed meeting you and talking with you.

We judge your academy to be satisfactory overall. It has many good features, including the care, guidance and support it provides for you and the courses and activities on offer. As a result, you told us that you enjoy being students at the academy, and that you feel very safe and well supported. You have positive relationships with each other, behave well and make a good contribution to the life of the academy and beyond it, for example by being student and sports leaders and eco-busters. You participate well in the wide range of clubs and trips that the academy provides for you. However, not all students attend regularly enough and we have asked the academy to continue to improve attendance.

The quality of teaching and the progress that you make are satisfactory. Your attainment is rising and is getting closer to the standard reached by students nationally. Some teaching is good, with interesting activities that enable you to be actively involved in your learning and which are well matched to your different abilities, and with good feedback on how well you are doing and how to improve your work and reach your targets. Not all lessons are as good as this, and one of the things we have asked your leaders to do is to make sure that all have these features in order to help you learn well. This includes the sixth form, where provision and outcomes are satisfactory overall but are being reviewed so that leaders understand how they can improve things for you. You headteacher, associate headteacher and other leaders are working hard to make the academy more effective for you. Another area we have asked them to improve is the extent to which they enable your parents and carers to work in partnership with it for your benefit.

You can help by continuing to work hard, behave well and by attending regularly. I send you and your teachers very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joan McKenna
Lead inspector

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