

# West Grantham Academy Spitalgate

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	136478
<b>Local authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	382058
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Lindsay Hall

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	202
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alison Fox
<b>Headteacher</b>	Trudy Brothwell (Chief Executive Officer) Steve Mitchell (Principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Trent Road Grantham NG31 7XQ
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<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	16–17 May 2012
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Lindsay Hall

Additional Inspector

Pamela Hemphill

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 17 lessons or part lessons, taught by eight teachers over a period of just under eight hours. Three of the lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Meetings were held with the Chair of Directors and a member of the Board of Directors, a wide range of staff and pupils, and informally with parents and carers. Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including: the tracking of pupils' progress; evidence from the academy's lesson observations and monitoring; pupils' work; procedures relating to safeguarding and children's welfare; and a summary of the academy self-evaluation and future improvement plans. Inspectors also listened to pupils read in Year 2 and 6. They analysed 47 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, together with those completed by staff and returned by pupils.

## Information about the school

Spitalgate is one of four academies within the West Grantham Academies Trust which serves a community with significant social and economic disadvantage in Grantham. This academy is smaller than many primary schools, having seven classes. Year 6 pupils combine with pupils from the neighbouring Earl of Dysart academy to be taught on that site. In its Early Years Foundation Stage, the academy has a Nursery class that accommodates up to 26 children on a part-time basis, and a Reception class.

The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of disabled pupils and those supported at School Action Plus or by a statement of special educational needs is above average. A higher number of pupils than is typical join and leave the academy other than at the usual time. Last year, the academy did not meet the current floor standards for primary schools. These are the minimum targets set by the government for attainment and progress.

A breakfast club and after-school club, managed by the Trust, operate during term time on the academy site.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>

## Key findings

- In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.
- Achievement is inadequate because all groups of pupils make too little progress as they move through the academy, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment by the end of Year 2 has been significantly below average for the last two years. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English and mathematics has remained significantly below average, with no improvement for the last four years.
- Teachers’ judgements about the progress that pupils make during the year are not accurate enough. There is too much inadequate teaching. The teaching of basic skills is not rigorous. There are pockets of good teaching, but too little overall to ensure that pupils make accelerated progress. Too many teachers have low expectations about what pupils can achieve. The level of challenge in lessons is inconsistent because most teachers do not plan work that closely matches pupils’ differing abilities.
- Behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Pupils generally behave well in class but, when teaching is weak, pupils sometimes lose concentration and do not focus sufficiently on their learning. A small minority of pupils, parents and carers expressed some concerns about behaviour.
- Leadership and management are inadequate. Senior leaders and managers have been ineffective in eradicating weaknesses in teaching and improving standards since the previous inspection. Systems to monitor the academy’s performance, in particular the progress of pupils, are not rigorous and data used are inaccurate. The curriculum fails to meet the needs of all pupils. For these reasons, leaders do

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not demonstrate the capacity to secure further improvement.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that they are consistently good or better by:
  - tailoring the work set so that it provides manageable challenge for all pupils
  - giving staff more opportunities to share and build on good practice, using strengths from within the trust
  - ensuring expectations are consistently high for all pupils in all classes
  - rigorously monitoring and evaluating pupils' work and the quality of teaching across the academy, putting the emphasis on learning and developing teachers' accountability for pupils' progress.
  
- Accelerate progress and raise attainment, ensuring that all pupils make at least the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
  - improving pupils' skills in constructing sentences, punctuation and spelling and increasing opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum
  - developing and consolidating basic calculation skills and their application to mathematical problem-solving activities
  - developing an academy approach to teaching handwriting and correct letter formation
  - developing and implementing an academy marking policy, ensuring that target setting and marking procedures consistently give pupils a clear understanding of their next steps for learning.
  
- Develop learning experiences for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - ensuring each activity, whether led by adults or chosen by the children themselves, has a clear learning purpose and is suitably challenging
  - giving children daily opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in a structured manner, so children are better prepared for Year 1.
  
- Strengthen the capacity of leadership and management at all levels, including governance, by:
  - reviewing and revising the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team so that it is more effective in driving school improvement
  - developing a rigorous approach to assessing reading, writing and mathematics so that data used for tracking pupils' progress are reliable and accurate
  - developing the role of the Board of Directors in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, and holding leaders to account.

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## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Achievement is inadequate because pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is too low. It has been significantly below national averages for the last five years. Progress is too slow for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, as they move through the academy. Inspection evidence indicates that too few pupils work at age-related expectations in writing, reading or mathematics. The proportion of children making the expected progress between Key Stages 1 and 2 is significantly below national averages in English and mathematics. Of the small minority of parents and carers that responded to the parent questionnaire nearly all agreed that their children make good progress at the academy. A similar proportion considers that the academy helps their children develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. These views are not reflected in the inspection findings.

The majority of children start Nursery and Reception with knowledge and skills that are below those expected for their ages. Communication skills are usually their weakest area. They make satisfactory progress in personal and social development and use of language. Relationships are good and some good quality dialogue between adults and children promotes and develops children's language skills. The teaching of early number work is weak and children's progress is not sufficiently rapid because time is wasted when activities do not have a clear learning purpose. The teaching of letters and sounds, together with letter formation for early writing skills, is inadequate. Children are not given enough opportunity to apply their phonics knowledge (letters and the sounds they make) and practise their writing skills in either a structured manner or through independent play. Consequently, most children leave Reception having made inadequate progress and not achieving age-related expectations in early reading, writing and number skills.

In lessons and written work pupils show weak skills in spelling, punctuation and sentence structure. There is no whole-school approach to teaching letter formation and handwriting and, consequently, the presentation of work is weak. Lack of opportunities to write at length, both in English lessons and across the curriculum, contribute to weak progress and standards in writing in both Key Stages 1 and 2. Insufficient emphasis on teaching and applying phonics to support the development of reading and spelling skills leads to low attainment in reading by the end of Year 2. Although by the end of Year 6 most pupils can read fluently, the teaching of higher level comprehension skills necessary to gain meaning is not sufficiently developed. The results of national tests in reading indicate that attainment is significantly below the national average. Weak literacy skills hold back learning in other subjects, and slow the progress of older pupils.

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Basic calculation skills are insecure and opportunities to consolidate these skills through problem-solving are insufficient. It was evident in a lesson observed in a Year 3/4 class that many pupils did not have the number skills or mathematical knowledge to do simple addition and subtraction sums. These shortcomings contribute to pupils' inadequate progress and low attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 6. Although pupils make accelerated progress in both English and mathematics in upper Key Stage 2, where teaching is stronger, it is not enough to compensate for gaps in their learning.

### Quality of teaching

There is not enough good or better teaching to ensure all pupils make the rapid progress that is needed to catch up on lost ground. During the inspection, nearly half of the teaching observed was inadequate. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows low attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at both key stages and indicates that teaching over time is inadequate.

Lesson planning is inconsistent across the academy. In the weaker lessons, teachers do not use assessment of pupils' learning to guide their planning and their expectations are not high enough. Pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs are often not effectively integrated into classroom activities. Inspectors observed some pupils who were unable to take part in lessons for long periods of time and were not supported sufficiently. In too many lessons, pupils of differing ability are set the same work, resulting in the more able pupils not being sufficiently challenged to extend their thinking, while pupils who find learning more difficult struggle.

There are some examples of good and outstanding teaching on which the academy can build. In an outstanding mathematics lesson observed in Key Stage 2, pupils were well challenged and fully engaged in exploring ways of recording their work when solving problems. They had to work out the different combinations of sports outfits that could be made up from a set number of different shorts, shirts and shoes. They were enjoying their learning and making excellent progress. However, this stronger teaching is neither sufficient nor consistent across the academy to enable pupils to make good progress and achieve well.

The use and review of individual targets to help pupils improve their work is not established. The quality of marking and feedback is inconsistent. Where it is effective, praise is given for good work and constructive comments are used to help pupils in the next steps of their learning.

Throughout the academy relationships between pupils, support staff and teachers are good. While teaching makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, it does not promote good progress in the core areas of reading, writing and mathematics. The parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire considered that their children were well taught. This is not

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reflected in the inspection findings.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour is satisfactory in most lessons and around the academy. Pupils are welcoming, polite and friendly and most pupils say they enjoy their time at the academy. Occasionally, in weaker lessons, when the pace of learning is slow, their concentration wanes and they do not listen attentively. Discussions with pupils during the inspection indicate that they feel safe, which also supports the view of parents and carers. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to keep themselves safe and show a good understanding of different types of bullying, and are keen to combat it should it arise. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about bullying in the form of name-calling. Records show that the academy always responds to such concerns, and pupils say they have confidence that adults will deal with any incidents well. Pupils insisted that behaviour, both in lessons and around the academy, has improved significantly over the last 18 months, so that serious incidents of misbehaviour are rare. The academy has been proactive and successfully raised attendance so that now it is broadly average. However, too many children, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, arrive late in the mornings.

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management, including the leadership of the Board of Directors, are inadequate and there has been no improvement in academic standards since the previous inspection. While the Board of Directors is supportive, it has not been effective in challenging leaders and holding them to account for the quality of provision and outcomes. The academy leadership lack the capacity for effecting rapid and sustained improvement.

Action taken to promote good progress in learning has been too slow and ineffective. Professional development for staff has not resulted in enough improvements to teaching. The academy has recently identified that assessment data collected each term are inaccurate. Robust systems for assessing pupils' work and tracking progress in English or mathematics are lacking. The role of middle leaders to strengthen academy leadership is underdeveloped. Both senior and middle leaders do not focus sufficiently on monitoring teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement over time. As a result, neither middle nor senior leaders have an accurate picture of the attainment and progress of groups of pupils as they move through the academy.

Safeguarding policies and procedures meet current government requirements and there are clear systems across the trust to tackle discrimination. Thus, leaders ensure the academy is a caring place to learn. However, equality of opportunity in learning is inadequate because all pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The welcoming breakfast and after-school tea clubs cater well for a sizeable group of pupils. They focus on additional learning activities and offer an enjoyable, safe and



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calm start and end to the day. The curriculum is enriched well by an exciting range of activities outside lessons, such as hunting the Gruffalo in Belton Woods, visiting London to see a Shakespeare play and an annual residential visit for Key Stage 2 pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully and a recent focus has been on the Olympic values of friendship, respect, equality and excellence. However, the curriculum is inadequate because it is not sufficiently adapted to challenge the most able and meet the needs of all learners and too many pupils have gaps in their basic literacy and numeracy skills.

## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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](http://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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**



18 May 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of West Grantham Academy Spitalgate, Grantham, NG31 7XQ**

Thank you for the welcome we received when we visited your academy recently and for filling in the questionnaire. It was a pleasure to meet you all and find out about your academy. We found that your academy is not doing as well as it should and needs extra support called 'special measures' to help it improve quickly. This means that inspectors and others will be visiting regularly to check that this is happening.

Here are some of the best things about your academy.

- Your attendance is regular and you enjoy coming to the academy.
- You get on well with each other and like your teachers and the other staff.
- You all have the opportunity to go on some interesting visits to make learning more interesting.

To improve your academy further we have asked the leaders, directors and staff to work urgently on the following things.

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all your lessons become good or better.
- Ensure you make faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You need more opportunities to do longer pieces of writing and to improve your spelling and handwriting. We want the school to make sure you understand how to use basic calculation skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Make sure the youngest children get a good start to their education.
- Ensure that all academy leaders, including the Board of Directors, share the responsibility to help you all make faster progress in learning.

All the adults in your academy want it to improve quickly and I am sure you do too. You can all help by always doing your best written work and trying really hard in mathematics. Thank you again for looking after us so well.

Yours sincerely

Lindsay Hall  
Lead inspector

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