

# Lostock Hall Academy

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	137111
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	395353
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Lee Northern HMI

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>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	805
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	William Pitcher
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Lowe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Todd Lane North Lostock Hall Preston PR5 5UR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 336293
<b>Fax number</b>	01772 337083
<b>Email address</b>	admin@lostockhallhigh.lancs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Lee Northern  
Peter Mather  
Kathleen Harris  
Andrew Henderson

Her Majesty's Inspector  
Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two day's notice. The lead inspector looked at the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 29 lessons, each taught by a different member of staff. Of these, six were observed jointly with managers from the academy. In addition, a number of short visits to lessons and registration sessions was conducted. Inspectors held meetings with groups of students, evaluated samples of students' work and also met with members of the governing body and with academy staff. They observed the academy's work, scrutinised a range of documentation and examined evaluations undertaken by the academy to ensure that it meets statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding. In addition, 374 questionnaires from parents and carers were scrutinised and inspectors also examined questionnaires returned by academy staff and those from a representative sample of students.

## Information about the school

Lostock Hall Academy is a smaller-than-average secondary academy and at the time of the previous inspection was known as Lostock Hall Community High School and Arts College. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is smaller than that seen nationally. Almost all students are of White British heritage and few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs or supported at School Action Plus is in line with the national average. The proportion of students entering or leaving the academy other than at the usual times is lower than the national average for secondary academies. The academy has specialist status for arts, mathematics and computing and converted to academy status in September 2011. It is also a National Support School.

The academy meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. It has gained a number of awards, including Artsmark Gold.

**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>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- Lostock Hall Academy is a satisfactory academy. It works hard to secure the support of the community that it serves. Inspectors received a large number of written comments from parents and carers praising the academy that rightly reflects the quality of support for students’ safety and well-being. However, the academy is not yet good because teaching and achievement in key subjects is only satisfactory and not enough higher-attaining students reach the highest grades across a range of their GCSE courses. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- While achievement is satisfactory overall, there are strong features to some aspects of the academy’s work. For example, students’ outcomes in subjects linked to the specialism of art and design and computing are consistently high. However, achievement in a range of other subjects, including in English, mathematics and humanities is only satisfactory overall, and weaknesses in achievement in science have only recently been overcome. In addition, the impact of some teaching and of the curriculum means that some lower- and some higher-attaining students do not achieve as well as they could.
- The good behaviour of the great majority of students makes a notably strong contribution to the academy community. Students respond well in lessons when provided with opportunities to take greater responsibility for their own learning or contribute more actively to group tasks or discussions.
- Leadership and management are good. Attendance is above average and improving, levels of exclusion are falling and referrals to the academy’s inclusion facility are low. Support and challenge are provided for weaker teaching through performance management processes and robust action taken where necessary. However, monitoring activities do not focus sharply enough on students’ achievement and identified improvement actions sometimes lack sufficient precision to raise the overall quality of teaching and learning more rapidly.

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

- Raise achievement so that it is at least good by:
  - accelerating further the progress made by all students, particularly in science and for higher-attaining students
  - further refining the curriculum to ensure it meets the needs and aspirations of all groups of students, particularly lower-attaining students, and to strengthen the support for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good and outstanding by:
  - making better use of assessment information to meet students' learning needs so that learning activities provide consistently high levels of challenge for all students
  - increasing the opportunities for students to be more actively involved in lessons and to take greater responsibility for their own learning
  - strengthen the impact of planned improvements to teaching through a sharper focus in all monitoring activities on students' achievement and by ensuring greater precision in identified improvement actions.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Students join the academy in Year 7 with levels of attainment that are broadly average. They make satisfactory progress overall and, by the end of Key Stage 4, reach broadly average levels of attainment. However, behind this generally satisfactory picture, there exists some variation in performance across the academy, between different subjects and between different groups of students. For example, many students make good progress in a range of GCSE subjects linked to the specialism, particularly in art and design, in computing, and in performing arts, and the many displays around the academy are testament to the quality of students' work in this respect. By contrast, in 2011, outcomes in science were inadequate. However, inspection evidence confirms that actions taken to strengthen leadership and to improve the quality of teaching and broaden the curriculum in science are bringing about rapid and secure improvement. Similarly, although a focus on ensuring that students meet nationally-expected standards in English and mathematics has been the mainstay of the academy's work, the progress made by some higher- and some lower-attaining students across a range of subjects has not been consistently in line with their capabilities. This is because not all teaching is effective in ensuring high levels of challenge for all groups of students and because existing curriculum pathways do not provide more effectively for students of all abilities. The responses of parents and carers indicated that they consider students achieve well at the academy; inspection evidence confirms that, while there are strengths in aspects of the academy's work, achievement is satisfactory overall.

In lessons, students respond well to opportunities to learn collaboratively, to discuss their work and to take greater responsibility for their own learning. In some lessons, teachers emphasise key words and subject-specific language well and this supports the development of students' literacy skills. However, work to ensure that literacy is promoted effectively across all areas of the curriculum is in its infancy and a corresponding focus on numeracy

across the curriculum is yet to be developed. Support for those students in the early stages of reading is secure and students who read to an inspector were able to break down letter sounds in words in order to read clearly and effectively. The learning and progress of disabled students and for those with special educational needs is also satisfactory. The emphasis on pastoral support for those students at risk of underachievement is a strong feature of the academy's work, including through work in partnership with a range of external agencies. However, progress in lessons for some students with special educational needs is more variable because not all teaching ensures that tasks and activities are adapted sufficiently to enable all students to achieve in line with their capabilities.

## **Quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although some good teaching and a small number of outstanding lessons was also seen during the inspection. No inadequate teaching was observed which reflects the quality of the challenge and support provided by academy leaders for less effective practice. A very large majority of parents and carers believes that students are taught well at the academy. Inspection evidence, which evaluated the impact of teaching over time, confirmed that while good and better teaching is a feature of aspects of the academy's work, it is not consistently the case across all subject areas.

Strong relationships, secure subject knowledge and a range of teaching approaches characterise almost all lessons at the academy. In the best lessons, teachers provide learning activities that capture students' interest and challenge them to achieve well. The pace of learning is brisk and teachers' planning clearly identifies how all students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs, will be supported to access tasks and make good progress. The most effective teaching ensures that all students have frequent opportunities to be more actively involved in lessons, share their thoughts and ideas with each other and contribute to class discussion. For example, in an outstanding English lesson, Year 10 students made rapid progress in learning because they developed their responses in small groups and the teacher prompted learning rather than directed it. At appropriate intervals, the teacher guided the students in reflecting on what they had learnt and thereby deepened their understanding.

In less effective teaching, assessment information is not used effectively to ensure that work set is well-matched to the range of abilities in the class, and sometimes all students receive the same task to complete at the same rate. As a result, the progress of some higher-attaining students slows because they do not access soon enough work that is more appropriate to their target grades. In addition, in some lessons, learning time is lost when students spend too long copying information unnecessarily from the board or from their text books, or where students listen for too long to teacher input without engaging more actively in learning. The quality of marking and feedback is similarly variable. The best examples provide useful feedback that guides students on how to improve; in some cases, however, books are rarely marked or the comments provided are of a more general nature.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour and safety are good and make a strong contribution to the life of the academy. Students show respect for adults and for each other and instances of bullying are very rare. Any bullying is dealt with very effectively and a number of parents and carers wrote in praise of the academy's response to bullying when it does occur. The academy places great emphasis on safe behaviour, and on developing students' understanding of their

responsibilities to the academy, to each other and to themselves. This can be seen in the downward trend in exclusions and in the number of referrals to the academy's own inclusion facility. Nevertheless, some students and a number of parents and carers identified that, on rare occasions, some low-level disruption to learning does take place. Although students recognise that the procedures for managing behaviour are clear and fair, they report that, in some instances, these are not consistently applied by all members of staff.

Attendance is above average and levels of persistent absence are low. Students' good punctuality to school and to lessons ensures that little learning time is lost. The rigorous monitoring of attendance and the prompt action taken to support students in attending school regularly are effective in ensuring that attendance continues to improve. Students have a good understanding of the potential dangers of new technologies and their good behaviour in laboratories and workshops ensures that potential risks are kept to a minimum.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher has provided a strong and very effective lead in establishing the reputation of the academy and, as a result, it is well-regarded in the local community. High standards of achievement within the academy's specialist subjects have been maintained and the track record of leaders and managers in securing good behaviour and attendance over time is seen in a trend of improvement in both aspects. Through performance management structures, appropriate action is taken to provide support and challenge for weaker aspects of provision. Students enjoy coming to the academy and parents and carers express their full support for the academy in all aspects of its work. Safeguarding procedures at the time of the inspection met all statutory requirements and record keeping and procedures in relation to child protection were very secure.

Although overall levels of attainment have declined relative to schools nationally, robust and effective action has been taken to raise achievement, most notably in science. Similarly, the impact of support for the achievement of higher-attaining students is seen in a rising proportion that is now on track to achieve the highest grades at GCSE, particularly in mathematics. The monitoring of teaching involves leaders at all levels and middle leaders are developing their roles well. However, although a range of monitoring activities is undertaken, it does not take sufficient account of achievement outcomes, including for different groups of students, in evaluating the effectiveness of provision. As a result, improvement planning lacks a sufficiently sharp focus on outcomes and the improvement priorities identified through monitoring processes do not focus with sufficient precision on improving the quality of students' learning and progress.

The governing body works closely alongside leaders and managers at the academy. It is effective in challenging the academy for its performance and provides good support, including during the conversion to academy status. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and the academy community is one where discrimination in any form is not tolerated. Differences in the rates of progress of different groups of students are closing. The curriculum is built substantially around a broad range of academic courses, and provides well for the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. In addition, opportunities provided through a package of alternative provision are helping to support the engagement and progress of a small number of students most at risk of underachievement. However, existing curriculum pathways at Key Stage 4 do not provide a sufficiently broad range of accreditation to meet the needs and aspirations of all lower-attaining students. As a result, the impact of the curriculum is satisfactory overall.

## 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 up exactly to 100.



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## 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.**



15 June 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Lostock Hall Academy, Preston, PR5 5UR**

You will remember that a team of inspectors visited your academy recently. We took careful note of the views that you expressed in our meetings with you and in the questionnaires that you completed for us.

We judged that your academy is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education, although we found that overall levels of achievement should be higher, particularly in science and for those of you aiming for the highest grades at GCSE. We have, therefore, asked the academy leaders and managers, and the governing body, to ensure that plans to improve the quality of teaching that you receive take greater account of your achievement and that, by improving teaching, this leads to improvements in the progress you make in lessons.

We also found that your academy works very effectively to ensure you have a safe learning environment where bullying is not tolerated. You told us that in a few of your lessons your learning is sometimes disturbed by other students. Some of your parents and carers commented on the same issue, although we concluded that disruption to learning in lessons is very uncommon.

As a result of our findings, we have asked that teachers ensure that all of you are regularly challenged to produce your best work in every lesson. We have also said that you should be encouraged to take part more actively in lessons and to take greater responsibility for your own learning. Finally, we have asked leaders and managers to further develop the curriculum in Key Stage 4 to ensure that the choices available meet more closely the needs and aspirations of all students.

You can also play your part in improving Lostock High Academy by continuing to attend regularly, behaving well and working hard. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Lee Northern  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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