

The Charles Read Academy

Bourne Road, Corby Glen, Grantham, NG33 4NT

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students' progress in English and mathematics is not good enough and below national averages.
- Success rates dropped in 2012. However, the academy knew standards were falling and put in place measures to deal with the underlying problems.
- Teaching is not yet good enough across the whole academy. In too many cases, teachers do not involve students sufficiently well.
- Although teaching is improving rapidly, not enough is outstanding and too much still requires improvement.
- Marking is not yet consistently good across all subjects, for example in English. However, the quality of marking is improving.
- Students' behaviour in lessons is not consistently good and not all staff manage behaviour well at all times. Inspectors saw too much low-level disruption.

The school has the following strengths

- Students make good progress in many lessons and indicators of success show an improving trend.
- Students develop good literacy skills. The academy is good at reinforcing these across all subjects.
- Students have a good understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues in a variety of contexts.
- The academy has made clear improvements in teaching over the last two years.
- Excellent leadership and extensive team working have resulted in a range of improvements since September 2012.
- The academy has a good capacity to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons, including several jointly with the principal. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Inspectors met with leaders and managers, staff and groups of students. They also held discussions with the Chair of the Board of Directors of West Grantham Academies Trust (WGAT), the governing body. They also held discussions with the chief executive officer and other members of WGAT.
- Inspectors looked at many examples of students' work, and planning and management documents.
- The inspection team took account of the views of the 15 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views of the 13 staff who returned questionnaires.

Inspection team

Derrick Baughan, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sean McClafferty

Additional Inspector

Information about this school

- The Charles Read Academy is a very small secondary school. It converted to become an academy in 2011, using the site of the predecessor school, The Charles Read High School. When The Charles Read High School was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- It is part of WGAT. The academy appointed a new principal in September 2010 and another new principal in May 2012.
- WGAT recently started a consultation process, due to finish on 28 March 2013, about their proposal to close the academy.
- Since the start of the consultation process, 5% of the students have left the academy to attend other schools and 11% have arranged to leave.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds.
- The academy does not use alternative provision for learning off the school site.
- About one fifth of students are supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding to help some students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals), which is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs that are supported through school action is twice the national average.
- The proportions of students supported through school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs are above the national averages.
- In 2012, the academy did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching and reducing the proportion that requires improvement by:
 - using outstanding staff to mentor those whose teaching is not yet outstanding
 - ensuring that all marking is detailed and gives feedback to students on what they need to do to improve their work and how they can do it
 - giving a greater emphasis on involving students in the learning process.
- Eradicate low level disruption by:
 - ensuring all staff consistently apply behaviour management policies
 - sharing best practice in behaviour management
 - helping all students understand how their behaviour affects their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Students enter the academy with standards that are much lower than average. Indicators of success had been improving steadily towards national averages since the previous inspection. However, several of them dropped in 2012.
- The rates at which students make progress in English and mathematics are below the national average. About the same proportion of students as the national average make better than expected progress in English, but a lower proportion than average make better than expected progress in mathematics.
- Examination results, which had been below average but improving, dropped in 2012 and remain below the national average. However, current school data, based on rigorous assessment in the school and examinations that students have already taken, show an improving trend.
- Students' work and discussions with them during inspection show that they are developing a good understanding of topics across a range of subjects, especially in English and mathematics.
- Students enjoy their learning. They understand well how to assess their work. For example, inspectors observed one Year 9 group drawing parts of the face. They gave each other very good feedback on how to improve their work.
- Students' destinations on leaving the academy are all positive. In the last three years, all students have gone into further education, training or employment. The academy monitors the sustainability of these outcomes very well and helps the students move on to the next stage of their lives.
- Students' literacy skills are good. Students are articulate, and read and write well. Arrangements to support students on entry and a strong focus on improving literacy in all lessons are having a clear impact on improving students' literacy.
- The academy makes adequate use of the pupil premium. Recent changes to support and mentoring arrangements are having an impact on this group. The gap is closing between their attainment and that of other students. In 2012 this group of students left Year 11 five terms behind their peers in English but just ahead of them in mathematics.
- Because of excellent support, disabled students and those who have special educational needs reach the high targets the school sets with them. Their achievements are above the national averages.
- In 2012, the academy failed to meet the floor standards for examination success by 2%, which is equivalent to one student.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Students' progress and the standards they reach are improving because teaching is getting better, with much that is now good. Teaching in mathematics is particularly good. However, teaching is not yet sustained at a good enough level over time and too much requires improvement. Teaching by some supply teachers is not as strong, particularly by those who are

teaching outside their specialist subjects.

- Too much teaching does not involve students sufficiently well. Sometimes teachers talk for too long and students lose interest in the topic. In the weaker lessons, teachers do not give work that is demanding enough to students who work more quickly than others.
- In the better lessons, teachers use effective and regular assessment to ensure that students know the level at which they are working and how to improve their work. In the weaker lessons, teachers do not check students' progress sufficiently well. Many teachers use questioning well to check students' progress but this is not consistent enough across the school.
- The quality of marking is improving but is not yet good enough, for example in English. In too many cases, comments are about what the students need to do to improve their work rather than how they can improve it.
- Most teachers help students develop good skills to work on their own and in small groups. In the better lessons, teachers use a variety of activities, including individual and small group tasks, to help students develop and reinforce their learning.
- The academy has worked well to make sure students develop their literacy skills in all subjects. In most lessons observed inspectors saw strong development and reinforcement of students speaking, reading and writing skills.
- Teaching and support in class are adapted well to meet the needs of disabled students and those who have special educational needs. As a result, these students make progress at higher rates than the national averages. Teaching and in-class help for students supported through the pupil premium are improving. As a result, these students achieve in line with national averages.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' behaviour around the school is usually good. They are generally courteous to each other and visitors. While staff and parents note that behaviour is improving, they are concerned that it still needs to be better. Students are also clear that behaviour is improving. They enjoy their learning and usually take an active part in lesson but inspectors observed low-level disruption on too many occasions.
 - The academy is good at developing students' abilities to work on their own and in small groups. They usually settle down to work straight away but can be distracted as lessons progress, particularly where they are not sufficiently engaged in the learning.
 - The recently introduced policies for managing absence are thorough and have been effective in making a substantial reduction in the number of persistent absences. The academy has also been effective in reducing the number of exclusions.
 - Attendance rates have improved but the academy acknowledges that it still has some work to do on this.
 - Since September 2012, the academy has introduced a range of effective measures, for example more detailed staff training, to manage behaviour. The new rewards and 'behaviour pathway' systems are working well. Staff and students confirm that these are having an effect. However,
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they have yet to have a full impact on the academy and a few staff are not following the new policies sufficiently well.

- Measures to combat bullying are highly effective. Staff and students are positive about the impact of these measures and examples of bullying are rare. Students have a good understanding of different types of bullying.

The leadership and management are good

- The principal's excellent leadership and very high expectations have resulted in strong improvement in the short time that she has been in post. The academy has made good use of the additional support received from members of WGAT to deal with the challenges it is facing.
 - Staff are clear about the significant improvements that have taken place in how they are involved in decision making. As a result, the academy has a very strong ethos of team working. Staff at all levels are fully engaged in making improvements and the academy's capacity to improve further is good.
 - Teaching is improving quickly because of the very effective approach taken by the principal, with the support of WGAT. Targets set for teachers are challenging. Robust performance management coupled with very good support for staff development result in a culture of cooperation and improvement throughout the school.
 - Arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching are rigorous. The principal carries out all observations to an exacting standard, as confirmed by joint observations with inspectors. She identifies strengths and weaknesses in detail and uses the results well to guide staff development. The academy uses external support well to moderate this work.
 - Given its size, the academy offers its students a good range of subjects to study. Between her appointment in May and the start of the current academic year, the principal reviewed the provision and changed the curriculum to meet better the needs of the students. In addition, the academy is developing further vocational provision, particularly in land-based studies and a new building for this is about to be opened.
 - Most students attend the after-school activities that are on offer. Given its size, the academy offers a good mix of sporting and other activities.
 - The academy works well to develop students' understanding of spiritual, moral, social, and cultural matters. For example, inspectors observed one lesson where students were not only discussing in detail the concept of marriage but also the concept of marriage in different cultures. Teachers use a range of lessons, such as religious education, to develop students' good understanding of cultural differences.
 - The academy promotes equality and diversity well. Because of this, discrimination is exceedingly rare and the school is a harmonious place. Relations between students and staff are good with mixed ethnicity groups of students working and playing together.
 - The academy manages its resources well. It is a small school but staff are particularly adept at ensuring students have a wide range of resources with which to study each subject, and have good access to the limited number of specialist rooms.
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- The academy knows itself extremely well. Self-evaluation is thorough and the academy accurately identified all the issues found by inspectors. Actions plans are detailed and senior staff monitor progress towards them very well, for example the intervention work to improve the quality of mathematics' teaching.
- The academy has good arrangements for getting the views of students and satisfactory arrangements for getting the views of parents and carers. The academy deals promptly with students' concerns. For example staff took prompt and effective action when students raised the issue of the few students who were smoking in the toilets.
- The academy uses well the support and guidance it receives from the local authority, with which it maintains links.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is very strong. The governing body is rigorous in ensuring that it meets its statutory responsibilities, including those for safeguarding. Because of close monitoring and involvement with the school, governors have a detailed knowledge of the work of the school and what it needs to do to improve. They use well their specialist knowledge, particularly in education, to help the school improve. During the 2011/12 academic year, governors identified that standards were dropping and the governing body took decisive action to deal with the situation. Governors are clear about the quality of teaching, through their involvement in robust performance management, reward and recognising good teachers. Governors use well the good links with different departments to hold these to account for the delivery of challenging targets. Governors work very well with the principal and provide strong support and challenge, for example in how she uses the pupil premium, salary progression and promotion for staff. Governors work well to share good practice across all the academies in the trust.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136479
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	402791

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Fox
Principal	Ali Story
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected.
Telephone number	01476 550333
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