

Freebrough Academy

Linden Road, Brotton, Saltburn, TS12 5SJ

Inspection dates

20–21 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		Good	2
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

- Although improving rapidly, students' attainment in English and mathematics remains below average, particularly for students eligible for the pupil premium.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently strong enough to make sure all students achieve as well as they can from their low starting points on entry into the academy.
- In lessons that require improvement teachers' planning is not good enough to meet the different needs of students.
- Sometimes students all complete the same work, meaning it is too hard for some and too easy for others.
- In some lessons the pace of learning slows because teachers talk for too long, leaving little time for students to complete activities or work things out for themselves.
- Untidy and careless work is not always challenged, leaving students at risk of losing marks if work remains untidy in examinations.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, staff, sponsors and governors all have a shared passion to help students to achieve their best, have high aspirations and be fully included in the life of the academy.
- Relationships between students and staff are very positive. Students behave well and are respectful and supportive of one another. They are a credit to the academy.
- Older students report convincingly on the transformation of students' behaviour and safety and of the great atmosphere in school. They are proud to belong to Freebrough.
- The small sixth form is good and, along with good-quality careers advice and guidance and students' improving basic skills, is preparing students well for their next steps.
- High-quality physical education (PE) and science teaching helps students achieve well in these subjects. Actions taken to help struggling readers read are very good and helping students to catch up successfully.
- This is a rapidly improving academy because of the good leadership of the principal and the rigour with which the senior team, governors and sponsors check the impact of the school's work and then determine actions to improve.
- Actions taken are having a significant impact on improving students' attendance, attitudes to learning and their progress in lessons. The impact of actions to reduce exclusion is impressive.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day's notice. Three inspectors were present for both days of the inspection and one for the first day only.
- Inspectors observed 30 lessons across the school, including lessons in the small sixth form. Four lessons were jointly observed with members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions were held with the principal, staff and three members of the governing body who are also lead sponsors. Inspectors spoke to students in lessons, at break and at lunchtimes. They also spoke to four groups of students, including the small group of sixth-formers, on the second day of inspection.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its work, the school development plan and the school's records of its observations of teaching and students' achievements. They also looked at policies and documents to keep students safe and some heard younger students read.
- The inspectors took account of 32 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 64 responses to the staff inspection survey.

Inspection team

Margaret Farrow, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Rodchester	Additional Inspector
John Paddick	Additional Inspector
Graeme Clarke	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Freebrough is smaller than the average-sized academy. It opened in September 2010 and is sponsored by Teesside University, Prior Pursglove College, and Redcar and Cleveland Council.
- Virtually all students are of White British heritage. The number who are eligible for the pupil premium is nearly double that found in other schools nationally. (This is funding available for students known to be eligible for free school meals, students in local authority care and those whose parents are in the armed forces.)
- Over a quarter of students have been identified as requiring extra help at school action because of their special educational needs or disability. This is above that found nationally. The proportion of such students receiving extra help at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- From September 2012 the academy has offered sixth-form provision for its first group of Year 12 students. A purpose-built Enterprise Centre opened in December 2012.
- A small group of students attend local authority accredited E2E alternative education activities.
- There has been a significant change of staff since the academy opened.
- The academy received a monitoring visit in connection with the academies initiative from two of Her Majesty's Inspectors in February 2012 and was judged to be making satisfactory progress.
- In 2012 the academy met the government's current floor standards (these are the minimum standards and rate of progress expected of secondary-aged students).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of good or better teaching so that all students, particularly those entitled to free school meals, make the best possible progress in their lessons by:
 - making sure that all teachers use the regular assessment information they collect about students' achievements to plan lessons that help students move on quickly from their varied starting points
 - reducing the time students spend listening to teachers and increasing the time they have to get on with their work, independently or in groups
 - making sure all teachers challenge students' work when it is poorly presented and help them to understand what impact poor presentation can have on their examination results.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although improving, the academy's two sets of results for Year 11 students were low in English and mathematics and in the proportion achieving five GCSEs including these subjects. Improvement in 2012 helped the academy to meet the government's floor standards. The proportion making expected progress from their low starting points into the academy also improved but, again, remained below average.
- Science results were above average and it is clear that the consistently good or better teaching, and careful match of students to the best science courses for them, contribute to this success.
- Some students enter English and mathematics examinations early. If they do not achieve their challenging target they resit for a better grade. GCSE results for the current Year 11 students show they are already ahead of where others were at the same stage last year.
- Improvements in teaching and better use of the additional funding received through the pupil premium are currently narrowing the gap between students eligible for free school meals and other students, but for Year 11 in 2012 the gap was too wide in English and mathematics.
- Reading programmes are impressive in the way they are delivered and in the progress students make. This is helping students with weaker reading skills to catch up to where they should be quickly. Students' literacy skills are also well promoted in other subjects across the academy.
- Lesson observations, students' books and teachers' assessments of students' work show an increasing number are making at least expected, and sometimes good, progress in class. The academy is making up ground from the previous underachievement effectively. Unsurprisingly where teaching is good or outstanding, students' rate of progress accelerates rapidly.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, who work in the additional classes and have activities set up specifically for them, make good progress. In some other classes, despite good individual action plans, these students make steady rather than good progress because the teacher has not taken their individual plans into account well enough.
- High-quality provision and good teaching in the sixth form are ensuring these students are achieving well and being prepared successfully for their future careers.
- The small group of students who attend the alternative provision make good progress in their activities and in the development of their basic skills. Leaders check regularly that they are on track to achieve their targets, make good progress and are safe.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The amount of good teaching is improving; some is outstanding but there is not enough good teaching to ensure all students make good progress in lessons or to fully tackle the history of poor results when the academy opened. Older students perceptively reported on how much teaching has improved and the great difference this has made to their achievements now.
- Alongside their priority to improve teaching, leaders' have worked successfully to instil good learning habits in students and to develop consistent approaches to managing behaviour. Consequently, students display positive attitudes in lessons and usually behave well. Good relationships between students and teachers, and amongst students, were evident in all classes.
- When teaching is good or better, lessons are planned carefully to make sure activities take account of what students already know and are closely matched to what they need to learn next. Teachers' good choices of resources ensure activities interest and energise students.
- Teachers check regularly what students know in order to identify their progress, determine future needs and tackle any misunderstandings. Expertly chosen questions challenge pupils to respond thoughtfully and with understanding, clarity and confidence.
- Informative marking leaves students in no doubt about what they are doing well, what needs correcting and what they need to do next to achieve their 'stretch targets'. Students are then

given time to respond to the improvement points suggested.

- Students are active in their own learning and often collaborate and help assess their own and each other's work. For example, in two outstanding PE lessons students were invigorated by well-planned challenges, leading their own learning and that of their friends, assessing each other's skills and achievements and working together to achieve their goals successfully.
- Although such good practice is developing effectively, leaders know it is not fully in place across the academy. In some lessons where teaching requires improvement the pace of learning slows because teachers talk for too long, leaving little time for students to get on with their work, with few opportunities to develop ideas independently, in groups or in pairs.
- Sometimes tasks are not matched to the different abilities of students in the class well enough. This is despite teachers' very detailed and regular assessment of students' work which makes it clear exactly what individual students need to learn next.
- Students are not always challenged about the presentation of their work. This means that some do not get into the habit of working neatly, and they are at risk of losing marks in examinations if work remains untidy or unclear.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Leaders' focus on creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust by example, and by developing students' social, moral and emotional skills, has transformed behaviour. Previous high levels of temporary exclusion have reduced impressively and permanent exclusion has gone.
- Discreet staff presence at break times enables students to socialise with their friends across the academy safely and maturely. The ACE lunchtime club has over 150 students attending. They play happily with a wide range of games purchased through their own fundraising efforts.
- Older students speak powerfully of the great change in behaviour since 2010. Some students who had been regularly excluded three years ago are now shining examples of the difference the academy's approach has made. They are mature, friendly, succeeding in their studies and are positive role models for younger students.
- The tutorial system, where students from Year 7 to Year 11 are grouped in 'small schools', contributes to a caring community where older students model high expectations and support younger students well. Behaviour in one 'small school' assembly observed was exemplary, with students responding to the teachers' presentation with spontaneous applause.
- The well-attended youth club 'Friday@Freebrough' gives students something to do and keep safe at the same time as having fun. Not only has this had an impact on students' enjoyment and safety in the academy, the rate of anti-social behaviour in the local area has reduced significantly. This is helping to build a positive view of the academy in the local community.
- Students report that they feel very safe. They say they are well taught about risks to their own safety through the curriculum, visitors to the academy and the good relationships developed with the pastoral team and staff.
- Students are made well aware of different types of bullying. They report that bullying, including homophobic bullying, does happen but that incidents are rare and dealt with robustly. Students reported enthusiastically about the FAB team (Freebrough Against Bullying) and how the team has had a massive impact on reducing bullying across the academy.
- Students also speak highly of Human Utopia, an external team who support senior leaders' drive to promote students' emotional resilience, and social, moral, spiritual and cultural development successfully. Actions like this and improvements across the academy are encouraging students' better attendance. From well below that found nationally in 2011, rates are now broadly similar.

The leadership and management

are good

- Leaders' unrelenting drive to improve teaching is increasing the proportion that is good or

better, contributing to students' higher standards in Year 11 and their faster progress in class.

- The focus on raising students' aspirations and improving their emotional resilience, and social, moral, spiritual and cultural development has resulted in students who take responsibility for their behaviour and the calm and purposeful atmosphere evident. Interesting activities like 'staff versus student dodge-ball' promote team spirit and unity of purpose across the academy well.
- Actions taken to secure equality of opportunity for all are reducing the gap between the achievements of students entitled to free school meals and their peers in class, improving attendance rates and eliminating the number permanently excluded.
- Leadership of teaching is good. Lessons are observed regularly and, where teaching does not come up to the high standard set, action plans, training and support are put in place. Higher expectations of staff and rigorous performance management arrangements resulted in a high turnover of staff. A strong team is now in place and the English team will soon be complete; this is important because some students have had too many supply teachers.
- Teachers are being held to account for students' achievements successfully because their targets are tightly linked to improvements in students' progress and national teachers' standards. Targets are checked regularly and, if not met, teachers do not move up their pay scales.
- Excellent pastoral care and partnerships with agencies such as the police, fire and rescue, and youth and children's social services are broadening students' horizons and supporting students' safety and well-being successfully, particularly in times of great need.
- Partnership with parents is developing well through regular reports on their children's progress and communications with home. All staff and a high proportion of parents who responded to Ofsted's 'Parent View' survey and to the academy's own surveys consider students are well cared for, safe, happy and are making good progress.
- Strong partnerships with the local college and business community contribute to the good curriculum which is being constantly adapted to meet individual students' needs and interests and to raise aspirations. The curriculum is extended well by many activities after the academy day, including residential and outward bound experiences that develop students' team working skills and confidence, standing them in good stead for their next steps.
- Year 12 students spoke powerfully about how they can now access high-quality business and enterprise qualifications locally, something they would not have been able to do if the academy had not secured the 'state-of-the-art' Enterprise Centre or developed a local sixth form.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are fully involved in the academy's drive for improvement and sponsors have ensured they are well equipped to hold leaders to account for the academy's performance. Governors and sponsors use their significant expertise and experience to good effect. All statutory duties, including safeguarding duties, are met fully. Sponsors and governors support and challenge leaders well through regular scrutiny of data on improvements to the quality of teaching, students' progress, including different groups, attendance and exclusion rates. They make sure pay increases are only linked to improvements in students' achievements. Governors check closely how well leaders spend additional funding for students entitled to the pupil premium. They have secured additional lessons and one-to-one support, including counselling and mentoring, as well as Saturday clubs, to help narrow the gap between these students' achievement and that of their friends. The gap is narrowing in lessons but actions did not have time to help the cohort of Year 11 students catch up in 2012.

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	136139
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	399807

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
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	740
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	8
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynn Parker
Principal	Linda Halbert
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01287 676305
Fax number	01287 677814
Email address	info@freebroughacademy.org

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

