

# Acle Academy

South Walsham Road, Acle, Norwich, NR13 3ER

## Inspection dates

24–25 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- This is a good school because the teaching is good, the students make good progress, and the school is well led.
- Examination results compare favourably with those in other schools, and the recent focus on improving the progress of students in English has been effective.
- Nearly all students behave well in lessons and around the school. The school is a secure, safe place to learn. Students say they enjoy coming to this school because of the pleasant family atmosphere.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers know their subjects well, plan lessons carefully, explain ideas patiently and keep detailed records of students' progress.
- The headteacher, other school leaders and the governors work together well. They share a common sense of purpose, check the teaching carefully, and are determined in their drive for improvement. They keep track on the progress of students very carefully to ensure they are all making good progress.
- Many teachers give their time generously to ensure students benefit from a broad range of interesting and enjoyable music, sport and other out-of-class activities.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not do enough to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills in different lessons, nor do they do enough to encourage students to read for pleasure or to develop independent research skills.
- Teachers do not mark students' books often enough or give them sufficient pointers for improvement.
- Teachers do not always set higher attaining students sufficiently demanding work to stretch them to the full.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons, taught by 32 teachers and visited ten registration sessions. Nine of these lessons were observed jointly with senior school leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, senior school leaders, teachers, and with students of all ages. They also talked to a large number of students during lessons and breaks.
- Inspectors also met the school improvement partner to discuss external support for the school now that it is an academy.
- They took account of 46 on-line questionnaires completed by parents (Parent View) and 53 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a wide range of documents, including: school self-evaluation and performance management documents; records relating to attendance, behaviour and the monitoring of teaching; and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Keith Wheeldon, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jane Ladner	Additional Inspector
John Mason	Additional Inspector
Ian Starling	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school was formerly known as Acle High but converted to become Acle Academy at the beginning of September 2012. When it was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2010, Acle High School was judged to be good. Acle Academy is not affiliated to any other academy.
- The school is a little smaller than the average secondary school and serves a largely rural area. Four out of every five pupils travel to school by bus each day.
- The proportion of students eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average. (Pupil premium is funding provided by the government to support pupils who are looked after by the local authority, those who are eligible for free school meals and those who have a parent serving in the armed forces.)
- The proportion of students with special educational needs supported by school action is average, but the proportions who have statements of special educational needs or who are supported by school action plus are higher than average.
- There are very few students from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language.
- Vocational education is provided for one Year 10 student at Horatio House in Great Yarmouth.
- School results meet current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of students.

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

- Ensure all teachers:
  - focus more on developing students' literacy and numeracy skills, whatever subject they teach
  - encourage students to read more often, to develop better independent research skills and promote more interest in reading for pleasure.
- Increase the frequency of teachers' marking and improve the quality of written feedback so that each student is clear about the next steps they need to take if they are to make good progress.
- Set more difficult work for the most able students so they find their lessons more challenging and are better prepared to answer the most demanding GCSE questions.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- When students arrive at Acle Academy aged 11 their attainment is in line with the national average.
- Over the last three years GCSE examination results have been above average, but they dipped and were slightly below average in 2012. During those three years students made good progress in mathematics and results in that subject were good. At the same time students made steady progress in English, and results in English were about average in 2010 and 2011, but below average in 2012.
- Students are now making good progress in English because it has been a school focus for improvement, and the quality of teaching in English is now much better.
- The school makes good use of additional funding to support students who are eligible for the pupil premium. Such students who left in 2012 typically took one less examination at age 16 and their results in English and mathematics were one grade lower than those of other students at the school.
- Teachers successfully use a variety of targeted programmes to help students who are eligible for the pupil premium to catch up with their learning so their results are closer to those of other students. Those currently at the school are making good progress. For example, following targeted one-to-one tuition in science results improved dramatically.
- Students who arrive at age 11 with results in English or mathematics that are below average are well supported by specialist tuition. School data show that the gap between the achievement of these and other students is narrowing.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are making good progress and recent examination results are above average.
- Students make good progress in most of their lessons. Standards are high in some subjects, such as German, business studies, physical education, dance, music, and in the 'ASDAN' life skills course.
- All students take a religious education GCSE examination at age 16, and students achieve more A\* and A grades in this subject than average. However, in other subjects not enough students achieve the top A\* and A grades.
- Reading is not given sufficient priority in the school. Although students read regularly, the school misses opportunities, for example, during tutor time, to encourage more reading for research and pleasure. Furthermore, students are not given enough opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other lessons.
- Too few students attend alternative provision to comment on their attainment without identifying them.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers plan lessons carefully and provide students with engaging opportunities to practise their skills and broaden their knowledge. They use questioning well to probe and extend students' thinking so as better to develop their understanding of important ideas. Parents and carers rightly believe that their children are well taught.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they use their expertise to inspire and motivate students well. This translates into good examination results for most students at age 16. However, teachers do not always give the highest achieving students work which is sufficiently challenging, nor the opportunity for them to develop ideas independently, so they miss out on the A\* and A grades they are capable of achieving.
- Disabled students, those who have special educational needs and those receiving other support

benefit from good teaching which is well-matched to their needs, enabling them to make good progress.

- Teachers know their students well. They use and record accurate assessments in class, and teachers and school managers use these data to track the progress of students very well.
- During lessons teachers frequently discuss progress with individual students but books are not marked frequently enough and the quality of written feedback requires improvement.
- Teachers are dedicated and professional, and fulfil their broader duties well. Students interviewed during the inspection expressed their sincere appreciation for the extra help provided and the wide range of sports and other activities provided by teachers.
- Behaviour is managed well by most teachers, and classrooms are purposeful places where students go to work.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Inspectors found that students behave well in lessons and around the school. They are courteous to visitors and treat one another with respect. Most parents and staff agree that behaviour is good and this is borne out by school records which show that behaviour is usually good.
- Students' attitudes to learning are good. They arrive at lessons ready to learn, respond well to teachers' questions, engage eagerly in discussions and work quietly without interruption.
- A few students misbehave occasionally but generally respond well when teachers remind students what is expected of them. Misbehaviour is dealt with effectively through a well-established system of punishments and rewards. The number of instances when students are removed from lessons is low and declining.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions is also low. Permanent exclusions are very rare.
- Attendance rates compare well with those in other schools but a few students are slow to arrive to lessons.
- Health, safety and child protection arrangements are good.
- Students say they feel safe at school and bullying is very rare. They say they enjoy coming to this school because of the pleasant family atmosphere, and everyone knows one another.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Members of the governing body, senior school leaders and those who hold other responsibilities share a common purpose. They are all keen to see the school improve for the benefit of young people who live in the area.
  - Senior leaders know the school well. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths, they know what needs to be improved, and they know how to bring about those improvements.
  - Regular departmental reviews are tightly focused on achievement, data are analysed thoroughly, judgements about teaching are based on first-hand observations and areas for development are clear and concise.
  - The school has a very effective system for gathering, storing and analysing data. This system is used well by senior leaders and those with other responsibilities to track the performance of students and staff. Information from the system is also used well by teachers for planning their lessons and when reporting to parents and students.
  - Partnerships with local primary schools are strong and these effective links help ensure the move from primary to secondary school goes smoothly. Once at Acle Academy pupils benefit from excellent international links, including the opportunity for some life-changing visits to schools in Kenya.
  - Professional development for staff is very well organised. Based on issues identified at the time
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of the last Ofsted inspection and others arising from performance management, the school provides a comprehensive programme, with content that is carefully matched to the needs of different groups of staff. As a result, the quality of teaching continues to improve.

- Students aged 11-14 study a broad range of subjects and the amount of time allocated to them is fair and balanced. For students aged 14-16 the school offers a good range of subjects and teachers make sure that the time spent on different lessons is apportioned reasonably. However, opportunities to pursue vocational courses are unduly limited.
  - The school successfully promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students through: compulsory life skills; religious education and other lessons; a wide range of after-school activities, including sports, music and drama productions; and through numerous clubs and study opportunities at lunchtime and after lessons.
  - The school provides a late bus each Monday and Wednesday so that those who rely on school transport also have the opportunity to participate in the many after-school activities, and this is much appreciated by students.
  - Registration and pastoral time is often used poorly, and this does little to promote good punctuality at the start of the day.
  - Since becoming an academy the school has purchased professional advice from the local authority. The school's improvement adviser provides good, timely, critical support.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Members of the governing body support the school well.
    - They are well informed about school and comparative examination results, know where the teaching is good in this school and provide support where improvement is needed. For example, they know that progress in English was a very high priority and they understand the outcome of recent departmental reviews.
    - The governing body supports current pupil premium spending but has not monitored the impact of this spending with sufficient rigour.
    - They have a good understanding of the performance management and salary progression of staff. They act to tackle underperformance where necessary, linking pay to performance.
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## What inspection judgements mean

<b>School</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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>

<b>Boarding/Residential provision</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138758
<b>Local authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	412831

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	700
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Debbie Bryant
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tim Phillips
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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