

# Wreake Valley Academy

Parkstone Road, Syston, Leicester, LE7 1LY

## Inspection dates

17–18 April 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Students' achievement is inadequate because many students do not make the progress that is expected of them, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are low. The proportion of students gaining 5 or more GCSE grades A\*-C including mathematics and English in 2012 was well below the national average.
- Some groups of students under-achieve. Boys, students eligible for the pupil premium and disabled students and those who have special educational needs make slow progress and achieve standards that are too low.
- The sixth form is inadequate. Too few students make good progress and so A level results are well below national figures.
- Students' numeracy skills are not well developed.
- The quality of teaching is very variable across the academy. Teachers do not always plan work that matches pupils' abilities.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently show students how to improve their work. The targets that students are set are sometimes too low and students are not sure what they have to do to achieve them.
- In lessons where teaching is not good students lose interest and become distracted. This then slows the progress made by students in the class.
- Teachers in charge of subjects are not all effective in checking and improving the quality of teaching in their subjects, or in checking students' progress.
- The academy's plans for improvement do not contain clear measures of success so senior leaders and governors can check they are working.

### The school has the following strengths

- School leaders have recently taken action to improve the quality of teaching. Some teaching seen by inspectors was good.
- Students are proud of their academy and feel safe. Teachers and students get on well together.
- Results from examinations already taken show that GCSE standards are improving and will be better in 2013 than in 2012. All groups of students are now making better progress.
- Attendance is improving and the number of students who are persistently absent is falling.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 51 part lessons, six of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to observe specific aspects of the work of the academy. Inspectors attended two assemblies and observed students at registration time.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of staff including senior leaders, subject leaders and other teachers with positions of responsibility. Inspectors held meetings with five groups of students, and spoke informally to a number of students at break and lunchtimes. The lead inspector met with a group of governors and with an external adviser to the academy.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to Ofsted’s online Parent View questionnaire, and looked at the results of a larger survey of the views of parents and carers carried out recently by the academy. They also considered the responses to the 87 staff questionnaires they received.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work and examined samples of students’ exercise books from several subjects.
- They examined a range of documents including information on students’ performance, the academy’s own checks on how well it is doing, improvement plans, information about students’ behaviour and attendance, and at how the academy keeps its students safe.

## Inspection team

Michael Phipps, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Isobel Randall	Additional Inspector
Anne White	Additional Inspector
Peter Lawley	Additional Inspector
Rosemary Barnfield	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.*

### Information about this school

- Wreake Valley Academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Students are admitted to the academy at two points: in Year 7 and in Year 10. As a result, Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 have five forms of entry, while Year 10 and Year 11 have 14 forms of entry. The academy has consulted on changes to these admission arrangements.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (extra government funding to support particular groups of pupils) is below average. The large majority of these students are those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is slightly below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is below the national average. The largest group is that of students of Indian heritage.
- A small number of students in Key Stage 4 have access to part-time work-related courses at Stephenson College, Coalville, and at Brooksby Melton College.
- The academy meets the government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Wreake Valley Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2012. When its predecessor school, Wreake Valley Community College, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The Principal was appointed in August 2011.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good by:
  - removing the wide variations that currently exist in the quality of teaching
  - sharing more effectively the good practice that is already in the academy
  - planning work that is more closely matched to the ability of all students
  - making sure that teachers' marking consistently shows students how to improve their work, and by giving students the chance to respond to this marking
  - making sure that teachers regularly check in lessons that students understand the work, and then adapt their teaching if necessary.
- Raise students' achievement so that they reach at least national-average standards in all subjects by:
  - making sure that that all groups of students make consistently good progress, especially boys, students who are eligible for the pupil premium, and disabled students and those who have special educational needs
  - setting ambitious targets for what each student can achieve and making sure that students know what they have to do to reach these targets
  - improving students' numeracy skills by planning how they can use and apply these skills in

different subjects.

■ Improve leadership and management by:

- making sure that the academy's plans for improvement contain clear measures of success so that governors and senior leaders can check that these plans are working
  - further developing the role of teachers who are in charge of subjects so they lead improvements in teaching, and so they check more effectively the quality of teaching and students' achievement in their subject.
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## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Students' achievement is inadequate because too many students do not make the progress that is expected of them, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Students join the academy with standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are broadly average. There is very little difference in the standards that students reached in their primary schools between those who join the academy in Year 7 and those who join in Year 10. The proportion of students gaining 5 or more GCSE grades A\*-C including mathematics and English in 2012 was well below average. Standards in mathematics and science in 2012 were also significantly below average.
- Most students who join the academy in Year 7 make at least the progress that would be expected of them in Key Stage 3, and many make better progress than this. Students who join the academy in Year 7 achieve more highly than those who join in Year 10. In 2012 the proportion of students who achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A\*-C including mathematics and English was much higher for students who spent Key Stage 3 at the academy compared to those who joined in Year 10.
- Boys make much slower progress than girls, and significantly fewer boys achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A\*-C including Maths and English than girls in 2012.
- Students who are eligible for the pupil premium make slower progress and achieve standards that are lower than other students in the academy, and which are lower than similar students nationally. These supported students achieved, on average, three quarters of a GCSE grade lower in both English and mathematics than non-supported students in 2012. The gaps between the achievement of these supported students and other students is narrowing slowly.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make slower progress than similar students nationally. Systems for checking the progress of these students and providing extra help have been slow in bringing about an improvement in standards.
- Variations in the achievement of different groups mean that equality of opportunity is not being successfully achieved by the academy.
- The sixth form is inadequate. Although standards are rising slowly, many students do not make good progress and so AS and A2 results are well below national figures in a large number of subjects. Students' achievement in work-related courses is higher than in academic courses. Actions taken by senior leaders are not predicted to improve A level results until 2014.
- Students' numeracy skills are not well developed. This is because the quality of teaching in mathematics is not good, and because chances to improve and apply students' numeracy skills in other subjects are not carefully planned.
- Students of Indian heritage achieve more highly than other groups in the academy and more highly than similar students nationally.
- Students who attended alternative provision at Stephenson College, Coalville, and at Brooksby Melton College in 2012 achieved well. This is because the work-related courses they took were well matched to their needs.

- Early entry to mathematics GCSE examinations, which has been introduced recently, is used to encourage students. This does not limit the potential of more-able students as all students resit the examination to try for the highest grades they can achieve.
- Results from examinations already taken show that students' GCSE performance is rising and is predicted to be better in 2013 than in 2012. Results are expected to be around national average figures. All students are now making better progress. This was confirmed by evidence seen by inspectors in lessons and in students' books. Gaps between under-achieving groups and all other students are beginning to close.
- Senior leaders have acted to improve students' literacy levels. Students in all subjects are encouraged to read for themselves in all subjects as part of their lessons, to use subject-specific terms accurately and to write accurately. As a result, students' standards of literacy are rising.

### The quality of teaching

### is inadequate

- Although the quality of teaching is improving, and some good teaching was seen by inspectors, it is still judged as inadequate because in the past there has not been enough good teaching to raise students' achievement. Inspectors saw wide variations in the quality of teaching.
- Teachers do not always plan work which matches students' abilities. For example, in a geography lesson Year 10 students with a wide range of abilities were all given the same task to do. This limited the progress of more-able students, who finished their work early and were not given the chance to think for themselves or to work without help from the teacher.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently show students how to improve their work. Although some good marking was seen, there are few chances for students to check their own work or that of classmates, or to respond to teachers' marking. This means they do not always know how to improve their work. The targets that students are set are sometimes too low and students are not always sure what they have to do to achieve them.
- Teachers do not always check effectively that students understand what they are learning and then adapt their teaching to help them overcome any difficulties. For example, in a Year 9 mathematics lesson students found the topic very hard but the teacher did not check students' understanding during the lesson. As a result students made very little progress and lost interest in the lesson.
- In some lessons where tasks are not interesting and too little is expected from students they lose concentration and become distracted. For example, in a science lesson Year 10 students lost interest with transferring information from a revision booklet to a chart, and their resulting poor behaviour stopped them from learning effectively.
- Support in lessons for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is inconsistent. In a Year 13 technology lesson, for example, additional adults who were supporting students gave them too much help and did much of the work for them, rather than asking them questions to help them to understand the topic better. In some other lessons support was much more effective.
- In better lessons students are set interesting tasks, relationships between teachers and students are very good and teachers expect a lot from students. In a Year 9 science lesson on forces, for

example, students were interested because the teacher used the example of a fairground ride. Students made rapid progress in their understanding because they had the chance to discuss their ideas with each other, and because the teacher's questions made them think hard.

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

### **requires improvement**

- Students' behaviour is not consistently good. This is because in lessons where teaching is not good, some students lose interest, become distracted and begin to misbehave. This then slows their progress and that of other students in the class. Students told inspectors that this concerned them, and staff and parent questionnaires confirmed this view.
- Although improving, students' attendance is below the national average. The proportion of students who are persistently absent, though falling, is higher than national figures.
- Students behave well around the academy at break and at lunchtime. They get on well together, even in areas where space is limited.
- Students say they feel safe around the academy. They are taught how to keep themselves safe.
- Most students enjoy lessons. They feel proud of their academy, and want to do well. Students who join the academy in Year 10 say they are helped to settle in quickly, and they soon make friends and mix with students who have been at the academy since Year 7.
- Students have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They say that bullying is rare, and the academy's records confirm this. They are confident that if they reported any bullying, it would be dealt with effectively.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- Leadership and management are not good because students' achievement and the quality of teaching in the academy are inadequate. Although recent improvements have been made to the quality of teaching, they are only just starting to make an impact on students' achievement.
  - The academy's improvement plans concentrate on the right areas, but do not contain precise measures of success. This means that senior leaders and governors cannot easily check that these plans are working.
  - Teachers in charge of subjects are not consistently effective in checking and improving the quality of teaching in their subjects, and in checking students' progress.
  - The range of subjects and courses provide good opportunities for most students. Appropriate work-related courses in Key Stage 4 are available. However, students' numeracy skills are not well supported across different subjects, and too many students are following courses where achievement is inadequate.
  - Senior leaders have put in place a number of measures to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers' performance is managed rigorously. Progression beyond the main pay scale is dependent on meeting targets for students' performance. As a result, the quality of teaching is
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now improving.

- Senior leaders manage the academy's finances well. Pupil premium funding and funding from the Year 7 catch-up premium (extra money to support students who did not reach the expected level in English or mathematics in their primary schools) has been spent on small group tuition and one-to-one tuition in English, additional staffing in mathematics, a mentoring programme for certain students and on specialist teaching assistants. As a result, these supported students are beginning to make faster progress, and the gap between their achievement and that of other students is predicted to fall to half a GCSE grade in 2013.
  - All aspects of safeguarding meet legal requirements.
  - Recent improvements in the quality of teaching, the predicted rise in GCSE achievement in 2013 and improvements in students' attendance show that the academy's leadership does have the capacity to make the necessary improvements.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors ask probing questions of senior leaders and expect them to raise the quality of teaching and students' achievement. The system of linking governors to subjects means they visit regularly and have a good understanding of the day-to-day work of the academy, and its strengths and weaknesses. They know how teachers' targets for improvement are set and how these are related to pay rises. Governors hold subject leaders to account in annual meetings to discuss their subject's examination performance. Governors effectively hold leaders to account for improving student behaviour. Governors recognise that they need to become more involved in the academy's self-evaluation and in identifying areas for improvement. They have a good grasp of the academy's finances. They know how the pupil premium is spent, but are less clear on the impact it is having on the achievement of supported students. They are keen to develop their skills and have had additional training to carry out their roles more effectively.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137983
<b>Local authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	412789

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1402
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	238
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Claire Drew
<b>Principal</b>	Antony Pinnock
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0116 2641080
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