

# Guthlaxton College Wigston

Station Road, Wigston, LE18 2DS

**Inspection dates** 24-25 April 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
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 requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students' achievement varies too much between subjects. Some students in Year 11 are not making the progress they should.
- Given the students' starting points, standards in some subjects are not high enough.
- Although improving, attendance is low and some students are not always punctual. High levels of absence for some students, particularly in Year 11, cause them to miss too much teaching. This reduces their achievement.
- Students' behaviour is not always as good as it should be outside of lessons. A number of students do not have positive attitudes and are reluctant to follow the academy's rules and meet the expectations set for all members of the academy. Too many students are excluded for short periods.
- Teaching requires improvement because lessons do not always demand enough of students and teachers do not give students sufficient scope to work and learn by themselves.
- The pace of change is not swift enough. The steps taken by leaders to improve teaching have led to some improvement, but not at a fast enough rate to ensure that it is good.
- The governing body's view of the quality of education at the academy is generous. Governors have not been demanding enough in holding the academy's leaders to account.
- The sixth form requires improvement overall, although achievement is higher than when the academy opened and teaching is more effective.

### The school has the following strengths

- Standards in English have risen.
- Pupils with a disability or special educational needs are supported to do well.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 48 lessons, and ten of these were conducted jointly with leaders. In addition, the lead inspector carried out shorter lesson visits to look at the quality of marking and students' work.
- The inspection team observed a wide range of the academy's work. Inspectors visited tutor periods, an assembly, and met with leaders, teachers and members of the governing body. They studied the academy's improvement plans, self-evaluation documents, quality assurance files, data relating to students' achievement and records about attendance, punctuality and behaviour.
- Inspectors considered the views of over 100 students who were selected for interview or who were spoken to before school, at break time or over lunch.
- Inspectors considered the views of 15 parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey. The views of 26 teachers who responded to the staff questionnaire were considered. They also took into account two pieces of correspondence received from pupils and parents during the final day of the inspection.

## Inspection team

David Turner, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jamie Clarke	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector
Elaine Long	Additional Inspector
Alan Brewerton	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Guthlaxton College converted to become an academy in November 2012. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The academy is not part of a chain or sponsored by an external organisation and was established by the Guthlaxton Academy Trust.
- The academy is an upper school for students aged 14-19.
- At the time of the inspection, the academy was in consultation over plans to merge with adjoining feeder schools located on the same site.
- The principal was in post at the time of the previous inspection, prior to academy conversion, as were several senior and middle leaders, many staff and members of the governing body.
- The academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school. The large majority of students have a White British heritage; approximately one tenth of students are from a minority ethnic background.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for particular groups of students including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is lower than that found nationally.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is below that found nationally. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above that found nationally.
- The academy has no published results at this point.
- The academy is responsible for the Tiger Tots pre-school, which is an Early Years Foundation Stage establishment with 39 pupils on roll. The pre-school is registered separately to the main academy and is therefore inspected at a different time.
- There is no alternative provision and no students registered at other schools attend this academy.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring teachers' lesson plans meet the needs of the full ability range of the students in all classes
  - improving the level of pace, challenge, engagement and interest in all lessons
  - ensuring students are required to use their existing knowledge, learning and skills to do more for themselves, more quickly
  - developing teachers' questioning skills to ensure they not only check how well students are learning but also require them to expand their answers and explain their reasoning.
- Improve students' behaviour and reduce the numbers excluded from the academy by:
  - carrying out a review of procedures for managing students' behaviour in order to identify and deal with current weaknesses
  - ensuring all teachers take full responsibility for managing students' behaviour in lessons
  - meet and talk with students to find out what should be done to help them make the right choices over behaviour
  - working harder with parents and carers and appropriate bodies to improve punctuality and

attendance.

■ Improve the achievement of students by:

- making sure lessons capture students' interest quickly and keep them engaged throughout
- making better use of the assessments of students' attainment on entry into the academy so that expectations for all students are high and teaching is more demanding
- intervening swiftly to boost the achievement of students who are entitled to free school meals where their achievement is below that of others
- improving the quality and frequency of written feedback, marking and academic guidance to students, so they are aware of how to improve and can respond.

■ Improve the quality of leadership and management by:

- ensuring self-evaluation and review are accurate so that leaders and governors set realistic targets for improvement based on evidence about the quality of education at the academy
- organising improvement plans with fewer and more manageable tasks to address the most important challenges, with clear and timely arrangements for checking on progress
- making sure senior leaders take action to hold all leaders and staff to account over the need to ensure that achievement, teaching and behaviour are good
- improving the quality of middle leadership, with a focus on raising standards, the quality of teaching and management of behaviour.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Information about students' prior achievement at local primary and feeder high schools, alongside assessments carried out by the academy before students join, indicates that students start at the academy with attainment that is below average.
- As Guthlaxton is a new academy, there are as yet no published examination results. The academy's assessments indicate that the proportion of Year 11 students on track to achieve five GCSE passes at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics is likely to be in line with that achieved nationally last year. Most students are on track to make expected progress in English and mathematics and some are likely to exceed this.
- However, assessment information also indicates that the progress of some groups of students in Year 11 is too slow. The poor attendance of a small group of students is having a negative impact on their achievement; these students are not on track to make the progress they should from their starting points.
- Rates of progress differ between subjects. Students generally make good progress in English. Teaching is more effective in this subject and good use is made of accurate assessments. Students' progress in some other subjects, particularly history, requires improvement.
- Large numbers of students are entered early for GCSE in mathematics. All students carry on with mathematics lessons and any who are likely to improve their grade take the examination again later in the year. As a result of this strategy, a significant number of students have already secured a good GCSE grade in mathematics.
- The attainment of students known to be entitled to free school meals and supported by the pupil premium is lower than that of other students. Inspection evidence indicates the overall gap between their achievement and that of other students is reducing.
- Disabled students and students with special educational needs make good progress. This is because they are assessed carefully on entry to the academy and are provided with effective support plans. As a result, they receive personal support from teaching assistants in lessons and their progress is monitored closely to ensure they achieve well.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. The proportions likely to gain A\*-B and A\*-E grades are in line with national figures. Inspection evidence indicates that achievement and teaching in the sixth form have improved since the academy opened.

### The quality of teaching requires improvement

- There is not enough good teaching to ensure all students make good progress. In one third of lessons seen during the inspection teaching required improvement and in a small number, teaching was inadequate. However, in two thirds of the lessons observed, teaching was good or better.
- Teachers' expectations are not always high enough. In their planning and use of assessment, teachers sometimes fail to take students' prior attainment sufficiently into account. As a result, lessons are too easy for many students and lack suitable challenge, which in turn means that

some students lose interest.

- Time is not used well in the weaker lessons. Teachers often take too long to talk about work and activities and the opportunities for all students to take initiative and work independently are missed, even in some of the good lessons seen.
- Teachers' questions do not always demand enough of students and tend to check students' knowledge rather than challenge them to explain their reasoning and thereby deepen their learning.
- Teaching is not well matched to the full range of students' attainment in some lessons, although the provision for those students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is more effective because of close support from teaching assistants.
- Behaviour management and the setting of clear rules are not consistently applied. Some teachers do not have effective strategies for dealing with low-level disruption in lessons.
- The quality of marking requires improvement because it varies in effectiveness from subject to subject. In some subjects, marking gives students insufficient feedback on how to improve their work, learning or skills. There is variation in marking even within the same departments. This is especially so in science and mathematics but there is also weak marking seen in humanities. There are also examples of highly successful marking in history.
- Good teaching was observed in most lessons in English and the sixth form. There were examples of outstanding teaching which show what is possible at the academy. The best lessons were challenging and based on very positive and professional relationships between teachers and students. In English in particular, assessment of prior learning is effective. This allows suitably demanding teaching which prepares students well for their GCSE and A level examinations.

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

### **requires improvement**

- Students' attitudes to learning are variable, reflecting the quality of teaching and the organisation of classes, particularly in mathematics. In the better lessons observed, students are interested and engaged because teachers have assessed accurately how well they are doing and work is challenging and suitable for them. However, in some lessons, expectations are too low and activities result in students losing interest. Students then chat among themselves or become passive. Major disruption to learning in lessons is rare, however.
- The behaviour and attitudes of some students outside of lessons are a concern. A few students find it hard to comply with the academy's expectations for their behaviour. There are too many fixed-term exclusions.
- Although most students attend regularly and are punctual to the academy, the attendance of a few students remains too low. This has a negative impact on their achievement. Actions taken to improve attendance have led to some improvement but figures remain below average.
- Inspectors found that some students lack an understanding of the risks of sharing personal contact information on social media with people they do not know.
- Inspectors spoke with over 100 students about their experiences at the academy. Many reported their concerns about the behaviour and conduct of a group of students who, as one student put it, 'are ruining it for us'. Students also spoke of the variation in the way behaviour is managed at

the school.

- Very few parents' or carers' views were recorded on Parent View, but recent surveys commissioned by the academy indicated concerns regarding behaviour.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Although leaders and managers have brought about some improvements, notably in provision in the sixth form, the overall pace of change is not rapid enough.
- The academy has students for less than two years before they take GCSE examinations. Leaders have successfully tackled some of the challenges this brings in terms of transition from one school to another. The experience of vulnerable students is a positive example. However, other developments such as curriculum planning and setting consistently high expectations of students' capabilities, have been slow. As a result, lessons sometimes fail to challenge, interest or inspire students.
- Senior leaders work hard but their evaluation of students' achievement, the quality of teaching and behaviour and safety is not wholly accurate. Their assessment of achievement is based on comparisons with local schools and colleges rather than national results. The evaluation of teaching is generous as is that of the quality of behaviour, despite the evidence that they are not good.
- As a result of these evaluations, leaders' improvement plans and the actions they take have been ineffective in bringing about improvement at the rate that is needed. Plans contain too many objectives and does not state clearly enough how progress will be monitored or evaluated so leaders can check on how well things are working and within agreed periods of time.
- Senior leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and quality of education provided in different subjects have not identified some important weaknesses between and within subjects.
- Subject leaders are not sufficiently held to account and the support offered to them as leaders in evaluating teaching has lacked rigour. As a result, they do not take a full range of evidence into account in their evaluations, including students' achievement, behaviour, quality of work and the marking of books.
- The curriculum meets statutory requirements, is broad and balanced and engage students who wish to succeed. Some new curriculum pathways have been developed, including vocational awards.
- Senior leaders can explain the use and impact of pupil premium funding. They have evidence of positive results and where gaps have reduced.
- Statutory requirements for safeguarding are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - In recent time, governors have not set sufficiently demanding targets for the headteacher and leaders of the academy. They understand that rate of improvement is not rapid, but are not clear why this is the case. Their understanding of the quality of education is hindered by the evaluations they receive from senior leaders which are generous. Governors ask searching and challenging questions and support the academy's leaders, but the weaknesses in the academy's self-evaluation do not allow them to reach a secure view. Their understanding of

students' achievement is also hampered by the ways in which data are presented to them and the comparison with local results rather than national figures. The governing body is aware of how pupil premium funding is spent and can offer some evidence of its impact. Governors use information about teachers' performance to ask questions relating to the overall link between the quality of teaching and pay. As a new academy, they have made arrangements for an external private appraisal of the headteacher's performance.



## 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>	138894
<b>Local authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	418372

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>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–19
<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>	1272
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	320
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Osgood
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Keller (Principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0116 2881611
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