

North East Wolverhampton Academy

Marsh Lane, Fordhouses, Wolverhampton, WV10 6SE

Inspection dates 5–6 June 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 have not achieved well enough and too few made the progress expected of them in English, mathematics and other subjects.
- Teaching requires improvement. It is not supporting all groups of students to make good progress. However, the quality of teaching is improving quickly.
- Despite significant improvements, behaviour in some lessons interrupts learning and is not well managed by teachers. Students' behaviour out of lessons also requires improvement.
- The sixth form requires improvement because there is too much variation in the standards students achieve.
- Leaders of subjects and areas of the school's work have not all been effective in making sure that students' achievement improves quickly. Recent changes are already making a good difference in the sixth form and for those students who need extra help.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal has high expectations and has led the merger of two schools well.
- Improvements to the quality of teaching, and other aspects of the academy's work, are having a positive impact on how well students are achieving.
- Teachers are rigorously held to account for the quality of their work.
- Students are cared for well, with particular strength in the approaches taken to support those most at risk because of their personal circumstances.
- Students' attendance is improving quickly.
- The governance of the academy is outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons, some jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspection team held meetings with senior and subject leaders, groups of students, a trainee teacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and two directors of the academy trust.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 18 parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and results from the school’s own survey of parents and carers. Inspectors also spoke to two parents by telephone. The results of the 57 completed staff questionnaires were also analysed.
- The inspection team analysed information about examination results, students’ progress, their attendance and those who have been excluded. They reviewed a range of documents, including the academy’s self-evaluation, its improvement plan and records relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

James McNeillie, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Helen Masefield

Additional Inspector

Neil Taylor

Additional Inspector

Ian McNeilly

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The North East Wolverhampton Academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The academy opened in September 2010 and is sponsored by City of Wolverhampton College, University of Wolverhampton and Wolverhampton City Council.
- Most students are White British with the remainder being from a range of backgrounds including of Indian and Caribbean heritages.
- Fewer than average students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is above average, and the proportions supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are broadly average.
- Almost double the national average of students at this academy are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals, and students from service families.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Currently 34 students attend courses and placements away from the academy site for part of the week. The providers involved are: Braybrook House; Good Shepherd Exclusion Centre; Orchard Centre; Learn Fit; Mid Point; The Willows; and Wolverhampton College.
- The academy received a monitoring inspection visit from Her Majesty's Inspectors in May 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that all students and groups of students, including those in the sixth form, make at least good progress. Do this by making sure that teachers:
 - plan lessons that match the needs of all students and are engaging enough to support consistently positive attitudes to learning
 - build in relevant and frequent opportunities for students to develop and use good reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills
 - provide consistently good feedback to students which gives them clear steps for improvement.
- Improve behaviour by helping students to have positive attitudes to learning in lessons and consistently good conduct around the academy.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that:
 - there is more consistency in how well all staff manage behaviour in lessons and around the site to promote the highest standards
 - current improvements to the leadership of the sixth form and of students who need extra help with their learning are maintained.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Too few students have made the progress expected of them, particularly in English and mathematics. In 2012, there was a wide gap between how well students achieved in the academy compared to all students nationally. Attainment in 2012 was below average with only 40% of students achieving five GCSEs at grade C or above including English and mathematics.
- Currently, students from all heritages, including White British, Indian and Caribbean, are making better progress in a range of subjects and the gaps that exist in achievement are narrowing quickly.
- In lessons, students' achievement ranges from outstanding to requiring improvement. Poorer attitudes to learning and teaching that does not engage and match all students' needs often prevent good or better achievement.
- The achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs also requires improvement. The impact of the additional support these students received has been too variable. Recent improvements, including the introduction of dedicated teaching groups for those with the greatest needs, are beginning to make a positive difference. This is funded in part by Year 7 catch-up funding (additional money from the government for those who join the academy with lower than-average-skills in English and mathematics).
- The large numbers of students supported by the pupil premium funding in each year group have not made good enough progress. This is now improving. For example, in 2012 this group of students achieved about one GCSE grade below their classmates in English and about one and a half GCSE grades below in mathematics. The academy's increasingly accurate evidence suggests that these gaps have narrowed considerably for current Year 11 students. Those supported by this funding in some year groups are making better progress than their classmates.
- Early entry to examinations in GCSE mathematics has been used wisely to increase motivation and the academy's detailed analysis shows that this has not had a negative impact on the progress of the most able students.
- Achievement in the sixth form also requires improvement. Students have made broadly average progress in some subjects but not enough progress in others, such as in psychology. As is the case in Key Stages 3 and 4, rates of progress are increasing. In addition, almost all students who leave the academy continue in education and training or gain employment.
- There are some good examples of where students can use their reading, writing and mathematics skills in a range of subjects, but this is not consistent in all subjects and all year groups. The impact of academy leaders' work in developing reading and writing skills is more evident among younger students. The Year 7 catch-up spending has also been used to help improve students' reading skills.
- Students who attend courses and placements with other providers are showing improvements in their attitudes, motivation and self-confidence as well as in their attendance. These are then having a positive impact on their employability skills.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not enough of it ensures that students make at least good progress. Much more teaching is now good than was the case when the academy opened, and some is outstanding.
- In too many lessons teachers provide the same tasks for all students, so some struggle to keep up and others find work too easy. This weakness often contributes to low-level disruption in lessons.
- Students are not receiving consistently good feedback on their written work that gives them clear and subject-specific areas to improve. This inconsistency is within subject areas as well as across the school.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge is an area of strength. The best teachers use their expert knowledge to ask carefully considered questions that make students think more deeply. Teachers also use their knowledge to help students to develop complex skills, such as analysing source texts and considering moral dilemmas in history.
- In the most successful lessons, teachers have planned to make sure that all students have the opportunity to contribute and to develop their learning. This was clear in a Year 11 biology revision lesson where students could decide which way of working best suited their needs. In art and sport lessons, students understood what learning was to take place and teachers used regular checks to make sure students knew how well they were doing and their next steps for improvement.
- Some teachers build in relevant opportunities for students to develop key reading, writing, communication and number skills, for example by discussing their ideas, understanding how best to communicate in a team, calculating an equation or spelling words accurately. However, this does not happen frequently enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Students do not have consistently good attitudes to learning and their behaviour around the school site is not always orderly. Punctuality to lessons is not good.
- In lessons, some students are reluctant to get started on work quickly, others do not work as hard as they could and some low-level disruption takes place.
- Students, and some staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, commented that behaviour is not always well managed. Inspectors also observed this inconsistency.
- Students' behaviour was outstanding in some lessons. In these lessons, there were very positive relationships and excellent attitudes to learning which resulted in students making good or better progress.
- The academy's records show that, as a result of the good work of leaders and other staff, incidents of poor behaviour are declining significantly and fewer students are being excluded from school. The plans leaders have in place to address inconsistencies in the management of behaviour are appropriate.

- Dedicated teams of staff who help with students' behaviour, attendance and personal needs offer good care and support to students. Students whose personal circumstances put them at risk are particularly well cared for.
- Almost all students with whom inspectors spoke say that they feel safe in the academy. They understand about different forms of bullying. Most, but not all, say that when bullying does occur it is dealt with quickly and effectively by teachers.
- Attendance is improving quickly with far fewer students persistently absent than was the case last year. These improvements are as a result of efforts to help students and parents to understand the importance of regular attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The principal has led the merger of two schools and a very large turnover of staff well. As the result of strong leadership the quality of teaching and students' achievement, attendance and behaviour are improving quickly.
- Leaders, including governors, know the strengths and development needs of the academy very well. There are frequent checks on the quality of teaching and the difference this is making to students' achievement. All of this has informed a highly effective development plan that targets which actions need to be given priority to make sure improvements continue.
- As a result of the rigorous management of teachers' performance, decisive action has been taken when teaching or leadership has not been good enough. Training and support for teachers who want or need to improve is making a good difference.
- Leaders of subjects and other aspects of the academy's work are also making a positive difference. For example, this can be seen in the better provision for those students who need extra help and the increasing progress of students in the sixth form. Some of these changes are relatively recent and the current pace of improvement must be maintained.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. This means that students' needs are met increasingly well. Leaders make sure that they receive regular feedback on how well students are making progress when attending courses and placements away from the academy.
- There is a range of activities out of lessons for students to choose from which contribute to their spiritual, social moral and cultural development. The 'Build a Plane' project, where students work with employees of Boeing and the Royal Aeronautical Society, is one example of how students of different abilities come together to work creatively.
- Good partnership working with other schools, including those recommended by the academy trust, is contributing towards improvements, such as in the sixth form.
- Safeguarding meets national requirements. Leaders at all levels take this aspect of their responsibility very seriously and regularly evaluate their work to see how it can be improved even further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an excellent understanding of the work of the academy and how well students' achievement compares to all students nationally. They know where there is good

teaching, where it requires improvement and the impact this has on students' achievement. Together with the academy's senior leaders, governors have taken decisive action when teachers' performance is not acceptable and to reward good and outstanding work. The leadership team is constantly challenged and supported to improve all aspects of the academy's work. Governors have a good knowledge of how additional government funding is spent and evaluate how effective this has been, for example, in improving the achievement and attendance of students.

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

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| Unique reference number | 136182 |
| Local authority | Wolverhampton |
| Inspection number | 399810 |

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

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|---|---------------------------|
| Type of school | Academy sponsor-led |
| School category | Non-maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 11–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1024 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 166 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Henriette Harnisch |
| Headteacher | Bal Pierpoint (Principal) |
| Date of previous school inspection | N/A |
| Telephone number | 01902 551551 |
| Fax number | 01902 551550 |
| Email address | info@newacademy.org.uk |

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