

Landau Forte Academy, QEMS

Ashby Road, Tamworth, B79 8AH

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Students make good progress which is resulting in improving standards across the academy.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan their lessons effectively to ensure that students achieve well.
- Students behave well and say they feel safe. This view is supported by the majority of parents.
- Students report that bullying does not happen often and that it is quickly dealt with when it does occur. Students are tolerant of each other and value difference.
- Support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good. Staff know students well and they quickly intervene when they need help.
- Senior leaders have highly effective systems to monitor the performance of all teachers. They have used this effectively to improve teaching. Training for staff is tailored well to individual need.
- The principal rigorously pursues excellence and communicates his vision well to staff and students.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teachers do not provide enough guidance to students through marking to help them improve their work.
- Students are not always given enough opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. Nor are they involved enough in shaping the direction of the new academy.
- Middle leaders do not have enough impact on their subject areas. They do not monitor the quality of teaching enough and the way in which they plan actions for their subject areas needs refining.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons, taught by 31 different teachers; all lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also spent time looking at students' work.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the sponsor, members of staff and senior and middle leaders.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including the improvement plan, progress data, minutes of meetings of the governing body, attendance data and records showing how the academy cares for and protects students.
- The inspectors analysed the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View) prior to and during the inspection. In total, there were 24 responses. Inspectors also took note of the staff inspection survey.

Inspection team

Jane Millward, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Full report

Information about this school

- Landau Forte Academy, QEMS first opened in September 2011. The academy is sponsored by the Landau Forte Trust and specialises in mathematics and music. It is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- Most students are of white British heritage.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is extra funding given to schools by the government to support children of armed forces families, pupils who are looked after by the local authority and pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, is average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- A small number of students are taught in alternative provision away from the school at either Torc Vocational Centre, Cornerstone New School or Kettlebrook Short Stay School.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the quality and consistency of marking by:
 - ensuring all marking is as frequent and as good as the best in the academy
 - giving students feedback about the next steps in their learning and engaging in a dialogue with them to help them improve their work.
- Foster students' sense of their own responsibility for learning by:
 - ensuring they can lead their own learning in all lessons
 - creating more opportunities for students' views to shape the direction of the academy.
- Improve the quality and accountability of middle leaders by:
 - encouraging their greater involvement in the monitoring in their subject areas
 - improving their development planning so that it is more rigorous and better holds them to account for their actions
 - developing more opportunities for their work and its impact to be shared more widely with governors and students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the academy with average attainment. The proportion of students who are achieving five or more good GCSE grades including English and mathematics is increasing due to the good progress students are now making. Standards last year were better in English than in mathematics. However, the academy has put strategies in place to accelerate students' progress in mathematics. This is paying dividends and mathematics is rapidly catching up with the very good standards in English.
- Standards show that students make good progress. This is due to the rigorous tracking and effective interventions that are carried out if students begin to fall behind.
- Students have previously been entered for mathematics GCSE examinations early. After carefully reviewing the policy, the academy has altered its strategy. A few middle-able students are entered early and standards for these students are regularly reviewed so that their potential is not limited.
- Current academy records show students who are eligible for the pupil premium are making good progress. The gap between their attainment and that of other students is closing, and rapidly so, in mathematics. Presently eligible students in Key Stage 4 are on average half a grade behind the others in English and two thirds of a grade behind in mathematics. Leaders make sure the pupil-premium funding is used well on one-to-one tuition and small-group support.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers. This is because teachers and support staff treat all students as an individual and have a very clear understanding of their specific needs.
- Progress for students who are educated away from the academy because of their individual circumstances is monitored carefully. They make good progress towards their targets and they speak confidently and positively about their work-based experiences.
- Reading is encouraged across the academy and students read well. An allocated time every week is dedicated to students' reading and the academy aims to foster a love of books and reading. The lowest ability students are regularly supported to improve their reading skills and current records show their progress is accelerated through well-targeted support. The Year 7 catch-up funding has been used to provide reading support, which has resulted in significant improvements in some students' reading ages.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching at the academy is mostly good, with some that is outstanding. As a result, students are making good progress. They enjoy their lessons and persevere to complete activities. They appreciate the opportunities to work together and they readily share their ideas.
- Teachers build good relationships with their students and consistently show concern and consideration for them as individuals. They provide well-targeted support and use additional adults well to help disabled students, those who have special educational needs and students who are eligible for the pupil premium.

- The quality of teaching is improving. Senior leaders work well with teachers to help them improve.
- In the best lessons teachers ask probing questions and encourage students to discuss their ideas. Students are motivated and work independently and are given opportunities to reflect on their learning. This was seen in a Year 8 music lesson, where students used instruments to play a pop song. In an equally successful mathematics lesson, Year 10 students developed their understanding of simultaneous equations through discussing their ideas with their partner.
- Students are aware of the levels at which they are working and understand the targets to which they aspire. Teachers regularly refer to target levels and encourage students to be aspirational by aiming for higher target grades.
- Almost all lessons have a reference to improving mathematics and English skills. These links across all subjects are helping students' progress in the basic skills. For example, in a Year 7 food technology lesson where students prepared and made bread, they were reminded of how to improve their mathematical skills of weight and measurement.
- In the lessons where teaching is less than good, the pace of learning is slower and students are not always pushed to move on quickly enough. Often the teacher provides too much direction and, as a result, students are not given enough opportunity to work by themselves.
- The quality of marking is not always good enough to make sure that all students know what they need to do to improve their work. While some marking is highly effective, it is too variable across the academy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour of students in almost all lessons is good. They typically have good attitudes to learning, including when they have to complete tasks on their own. This makes a strong contribution to their improving achievement.
- Students have a good understanding of bullying, including prejudice and cyber-based bullying. They say that bullying is rare and they are confident that staff would deal with it promptly. They know that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Most parents agree that their child is well looked after at school.
- Students are generally punctual to lessons. Although improving, attendance rates are average. The academy continues to rigorously address this issue. The number of students who are persistently absent has reduced significantly.
- Students say they feel safe in the academy. It provides a safe and secure environment that is valued by students. Students are grateful for the 'oasis' which provides a haven for students who want support.
- Students enjoy taking on responsibilities and making a contribution to their own, and the wider community. For example, the student choir and band regularly performs in the local community. Older students are given responsibilities such as house captains and head boy and girl. They deal with these roles with maturity. However, there are not enough opportunities for students to make their views known and help shape the direction of the academy.

- Teachers have very good relationships with students and this contributes to students' mature attitudes to learning. Students work well with each other, listen to one another's views and respond to the teacher's instructions sensibly. Behaviour out of the classroom is also good. The school site is calm and orderly.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well and supports their good behaviour. The opportunities to develop moral and social understanding are of a high quality, and students immerse themselves in a wide range of enrichment activities.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal is committed to raising aspirations across the academy. He is determined to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching. He has united his senior leadership team so that everyone is focused on the agreed aims of the academy. Underperformance is rigorously challenged.
- Senior leaders are working hard to achieve high standards in the academy. A contributing factor is that everyone feels valued and has an equal opportunity to succeed. There are rigorous systems in place to monitor, evaluate and review the work of the academy. As a result, leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the academy. Students however, are not involved in the process of self-evaluation.
- Teaching is managed well. Teachers' planning is monitored by subject and senior leaders to ensure consistency. A comprehensive programme of support is available for those whose teaching is not consistently good. Strong links have been made between the academy and others in the Landau Forte Trust. The Trust provides effective support for the academy in assuring its view of its work is accurate.
- The management of teachers' performance is closely linked to school improvement planning, staff training needs and the setting of challenging targets. These procedures are known well and governors are heavily involved in the procedures to monitor staff performance. This rigour has enabled teaching over time to improve. Targets are closely linked to the standards that teachers should achieve and are aligned to the academy's priorities.
- The curriculum meets the needs of all learners well. It combines the development of core skills with the academy's music specialism. This works well and supports the students' good achievement.
- Middle leaders are developing and they are keen to have a greater impact on their subject areas. They currently undertake some monitoring and formulate improvement plans. Senior leaders are working alongside middle leaders to train them in how to better evaluate the quality of teaching in their subjects. At the present time they do not sufficiently influence the improvements in their subject areas.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors and sponsors are experienced and insightful, bringing a range of skills to their roles. Their focused evaluation, support and challenge are key factors in the academy's development. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and monitor the academy's performance very well. Governors are clear that teaching which falls short of the mark will not be rewarded. Decisions about teachers' pay are only taken after a very careful analysis of their performance. Governors have clear expectations about the academy's performance, including a vision to become outstanding. They ask challenging questions and ensure the school

provides very good value for money, including the spending of pupil-premium funds. Governors and sponsors take their responsibilities for safeguarding seriously and safeguarding procedures are met.

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	137146
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	399851

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	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	736
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Bell
Headteacher	Mr Robert Fell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01827 62241
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