

Cathedral Academy

Thornes Road, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF2 8QF

Inspection dates

11–12 July 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		Good	2
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' achievement requires improvement. Progress in the key subject of mathematics is not rapid enough across the academy. In addition, students in Years 7 and 8 do not make rapid enough progress overall.
- Teaching requires improvement because its overall quality is not yet consistently good.
- Teachers' planning does not consistently take account of students' previous learning. In particular, work is pitched at the wrong level for more-able students. As a result, they find the work too easy and so do not learn as much as they should.
- Teachers do not create enough opportunities for students to find things out for themselves by learning independently.
- Marking does not always show students how to improve their work and reach their targets, and they do not always respond to advice.
- Opportunities are often missed for students to improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills through work in other subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The Principal has been relentless in driving up standards in the academy. Her senior leadership team and the governing body provide a strong and secure basis to sustain and build on current good improvement.
- Effective monitoring, support and training are leading to significant improvements in the quality of teaching with considerably more becoming good or outstanding.
- Checks on teaching to challenge that which requires improvement are robust.
- There is strong evidence of improvement in Years 10 and 11 and in English and a number of other subjects.
- High quality support is given to students whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Students' behaviour in and around the academy is good. Students feel safe within a supportive environment
- The academy has worked successfully to improve attendance, which is now average.
- The academy's sixth form performing arts provision is highly motivational. Teaching in the sixth form is inspirational and as a result students make exceptional progress and attain highly. Overall, the sixth form is outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons of which four were joint observations with the Principal and members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions were held with senior staff, subject leaders, teaching staff, members of the governing body and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors spoke to students in lessons, at breaks and during lunchtimes. They also listened to students read in Year 7 and spoke formally to a group of students.
- Inspectors viewed the academy's work and checked work in students' books in lessons. They also undertook, with senior staff, a longer examination of students' work in their books from the past year in English, mathematics and science. They looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to students' progress over time, the academy's view of its own performance, and improvement planning and safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors took account of 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the academy's latest parental survey. They also took account of 87 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Griffiths, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Clive Hurren

Additional Inspector

Neil MacKenzie

Additional Inspector

Tony Price

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this academy

- This academy converted to its current status on 1 January 2012. When its predecessor school, known as Cathedral School, Wakefield's School of the Arts, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Over 75% students are of White British heritage, and over 8% are of Pakistani heritage. A growing number of students represent a range of other ethnic minority groups, in particular from Eastern Europe. As a result, there are an increasing number of students who are in the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority, is nearly double the national average.
- The academy offers a sixth form provision known as Cathedral Academy of Performing Arts. It provides specialised performing arts courses. A quarter of its students attended Cathedral Academy at Key Stages 3 and 4. The rest attend from a wider area of Yorkshire.
- The academy has met the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy makes no use of alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better by:
 - continuing to share the good practice in teaching that already exists in the academy
 - ensuring that all teachers take full account of the different ability levels, particularly the more-able students, when planning and teaching lessons and have consistently high expectations of what all students can achieve
 - increasing opportunities for students to further develop and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects
 - improving the consistency of marking so that all students are clear about what they need to do to improve their work and providing students with opportunities to respond to the advice they are given by their teachers
 - giving students of all abilities the skills to work independently, express and explain their own ideas and discover solutions for themselves.
- Raise students' achievement, particularly in mathematics and in Years 7 and 8 by:
 - ensuring all teachers have consistently high expectations on what students can achieve
 - accelerating the progress of the more-able students in order to improve standards in Years 7 and 8 and increase the number of students who get A*-A grades at GCSE in mathematics
 - increasing the opportunities students have to write at length in different subjects
 - ensuring that reading opportunities are fully effective throughout the academy, so that recent improvements in standards of reading continue
 - providing more chances for students to practise their mathematical skills in real life contexts, for example, to solve problems.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Rates of progress are inconsistent across different subjects and groups of students. In mathematics and in Years 7 and 8 students do not make good progress over time or achieve as much as they could in lessons. More-able students are not challenged sufficiently to work at the highest level and therefore they make less progress than they should. As a result, students' achievement overall requires improvement.
- Students join the academy with below average standards. When they leave Year 11, standards are still below average overall. However, standards across the academy are rising steadily and students are now making better progress, especially in Key Stage 4. Students in the current Year 11 are on track to achieve higher standards than those who took examinations last year.
- With the exception of Years 7 and 8 progress in English is consistently good and students achieve well in this subject because of the strength of teaching. By the time they leave Year 11, standards in English are broadly average.
- Students do not make rapid enough progress in Years 7 and 8 because of inconsistencies in teaching. This was confirmed by data provided by the academy for inspectors.
- In mathematics achievement has been more patchy because of weaknesses in teaching and difficulties in recruiting good teachers. Leaders have worked relentlessly to address this as the strongly improving results indicate. Despite these efforts, achievement in mathematics is not yet good because not enough students make the progress they should and the number of highest grades awarded at GCSE are too low.
- Students with disabilities or special educational needs make good progress which compares favourably with other schools. An increasing number achieve challenging targets due to the effective support they receive.
- The school monitors its use of the pupil premium effectively. In 2012, students eligible for free school meals did not make the same rates of progress than students who are not eligible. In 2012, these students gained GCSE results in English and mathematics that were about three quarters of a grade below other students in the academy. Due to highly effective intervention this year, the gap in achievement is closing. The Year 7 catch-up arrangements are having a similar impact.
- The academy has an early entry policy for a number of examinations; however this has had a detrimental effect on student's progress, particularly in the proportion achieving the highest grade. Leaders are addressing this by ensuring that more students follow a more traditional academic course.
- Students who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as other students. The previous underachievement of the growing number of east European students at the academy has been recognised and a range of new strategies have been used to promote higher levels of engagement. Students arriving at different points in the academy year receive good support to help them to catch up. This reflects very positively on the academy's increasing success in promoting equality of opportunity.
- In the sixth form students make excellent progress across all performing arts subjects. The academy offers qualifications in performance and production and students are attaining at higher levels than those nationally.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although it is quickly improving, teaching is not yet consistently good. Where teaching requires improvement, it is because expectations are too low, the pace of learning is too slow, or activities demand too little. This is particularly so in mathematics when teaching focuses students' learning techniques and answering basic questions rather than understanding the ideas behind them through practising skills in real-life contexts.

- Sometimes teachers do not use the available information about how well students are learning to guide them in planning lessons and inform their planning. Consequently, in some lessons, the same activities are set for the whole class without taking account of their previous learning. Students and especially the more-able do not therefore always learn as much as they could because they are given work that is too easy or too difficult.
- Overall the quality of marking and feedback is also variable. Some teachers do provide explanations about what is done well and how to improve further. However, students are not always given opportunities to respond to teachers' marking and amend their work. As a result, mistakes are repeated, leaving gaps in learning.
- In the best lessons teachers inspire and motivate students to enjoy learning and make rapid progress. For example, in an outstanding Year 9 mathematics lesson students were animatedly discussing complex concepts. The teacher gave very precise explanations, and activities ensured that all students were stretched. Marking was thorough and helped students see the next steps they need to make.
- Similarly, in an outstanding food and technology lesson progress was rapid because the teacher injected energy and fun and asked questions which deepened understanding. In this lesson, two students carried out the demonstration while the rest of the class observed and asked questions. As a result of this students were expected to express and explain their own ideas.
- There are sound policies in place to promote good basic literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects, but these are not always implemented effectively. Some teachers take care to remind students of spelling, grammar and punctuation in their marking but this is inconsistent.
- Students with disabilities or special educational needs are supported well. Teachers are kept informed about individual needs and can plan appropriate activities. As a result, these students make good progress because any gaps in understanding are addressed. Teaching for ethnic minority groups is good and as a result of this these students make good progress in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Inspectors were impressed with students' behaviour during the inspection and academy records indicate that behaviour has significantly improved in the last two years with fewer exclusions and fewer removals from lessons.
- Students are typically polite and considerate. Their behaviour around the academy at break and lunch times and in between lessons contributes to a calm and purposeful atmosphere.
- Students say that they feel safe in the academy. They are knowledgeable about different kinds of bullying, including cyber bullying, but feel that any bullying issues will be promptly dealt with by the academy. Students are well informed about keeping themselves safe and have a sensible attitude to risk taking. Through work in lessons, assemblies and talks from outside experts they have a good understanding of the dangers of, for example, drug and alcohol misuse.
- Most students exhibit positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. Occasionally when teaching is less than good and students are not suitably challenged, they lose concentration and can become 'off task'. Inspectors observed this behaviour on a few occasions and students alluded to it during discussions.
- Attendance has improved at an impressive rate since the academy was launched. The highly effective systems that are now in place to monitor absence means that attendance levels are in line with other schools and improving. The number of students who are persistently absent or late has also reduced. This is because systems for challenging poor attendance and behaviour are now applied consistently across the academy.
- The large majority of parents agree that the academy makes sure its students are well behaved.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal has worked very successfully to raise expectations, develop new systems and processes and hold staff rigorously to account for student outcomes. She is ably supported by

members of her senior leadership team who are leading effectively in their areas. Together they show great determination in driving forward improvements.

- As a result of this strong leadership and management the progress students make is improving rapidly and the quality of teaching is being transformed because of the highly personalised training programme that leaders have put in place.
- Senior leaders have a precise understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching. Although inconsistent and not yet good overall, standards of teaching are improving rapidly as a result of careful checks. Together with subject and pastoral leaders, the senior team work highly effectively to tackle any teaching that is inadequate or requires improvement.
- There are robust and rigorous systems in place to manage the performance of staff, which link to their progression through pay scales. Support programmes and wider professional training are closely matched to the needs of the academy and individual staff. Teaching staff spoke very highly during the course of the inspection of the excellent professional opportunities that are made available to them and the impact this is having on the quality of their teaching.
- The quality of the curriculum is improving and it is broad and balanced. There are a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The outstanding sixth form performing arts provision is being extended into Year 7 where CAPA (Cathedral Academy Performing Arts) juniors group will have an extended day to engage in more performing arts activities.
- Sometimes, however, opportunities are missed to develop mathematical skills by solving problems based on real-life situations. The curriculum does not offer enough to stretch the more-able students. Leaders are aware of this and have put systems in place to ensure that appropriate training is supporting staff to successfully engage and challenge students.
- The leadership of the sixth form performing arts provision is outstanding. The curriculum provides memorable and motivational opportunities in which students thrive. As a result of this one hundred percent of students achieved their first choice university or college in 2012, including the Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance, the Arts Educational School and East 15 Acting School. All of these institutions demand the highest academic results and rigorous auditions.
- The academy is working with significant success to develop student leadership skills to support students in their next steps, either in employment or in further education and training. This includes opportunities to become members of the student leadership team, house captains, digital leaders and teaching and learning leaders. As a result of this students are growing in confidence and the vast majority of students continue with their education or secure employment.
- Many staff completed the voluntary questionnaire for the inspection. The level of pride and enthusiasm was impressive, a testimony to the sense of purpose and ethos that the Principal and senior leaders have created. There was, however, a minority of support staff who feel that the academy has not provided well for their professional development.
- The academy works well with parents, particularly those who are harder to reach. Their responses to questionnaires show that parents are very supportive of the academy and are proud of its achievements. Their views contrast very favourably with the few negative responses of parents on the Ofsted 'Parent View' survey.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced by the academy's Christian ethos. This is at the heart of the academy's drive to develop well informed, tolerant, caring young people. Students understand and value the diverse range of faiths and cultures that represent their community. The performing arts specialism promotes, very effectively, all aspects of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The academy meets statutory responsibility for safeguarding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective, proud of the academy and is ambitious for its students to do well. Governors bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the service of the academy and show a sharp understanding of its performance through rigorous evaluation of performance data. They challenge and support the academy robustly over its performance. They have evaluated the academy's appraisal system and fully understand arrangements to

link this to the quality of teaching, student's achievement and increases in staff salaries. They know how pupil and Year 7 catch-up premium funding is deployed and question leaders about its impact.

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	137764
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	412799

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	795
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Parton
Headteacher	Tay Warren
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2010
Telephone number	01924 330640
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