

The Axholme Academy

Wharf Road, Crowle, North Lincolnshire, DN17 4HU

Inspection dates 29–30 October 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.

- All governors, leaders and staff share the Principal's very clear vision for the academy to become outstanding. Senior leaders have developed rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems which are leading to improvements in teaching and achievement. They have a clear understanding of what needs to be done and how to do it
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to provide students with a range of engaging activities which help them to make good progress. Imaginative training provided by the academy is helping to make more teaching outstanding.
- Achievement is improving and above average. Achievement in mathematics is outstanding.
- Students' behaviour is very good. They are very proud of their academy and have excellent relationships with each other and with staff. They feel safe and are safe.
- Parents are very positive about the work of the school. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View said they would recommend the school to another parent.
- The governing body is ambitious for the school and provides effective support and challenge to senior leaders. As a result of the effective partnership between governors and senior leaders, teaching has improved and students are making more progress, especially in mathematics.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in English is above average. But given their starting points, students make good progress in English compared to the outstanding progress they make in mathematics.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Teachers do not always consistently ask effective questions which allow the students to provide detailed answers.
- Although the 'triple impact marking' policy is used well by some teachers, the quality of marking and feedback to help students to improve their progress is inconsistent. Students are not always given time to respond to feedback.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw 27 lessons, including six made jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors made shorter visits to two lessons to observe the support for students who were having additional help. Inspectors also listened to a small number of students read.
- Meetings were held with the Principal and other senior leaders, staff, students, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors and the school improvement partner. Informal discussions also took place with students at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation and its improvement plans; safeguarding records and those relating to students' attendance and behaviour; data analysing students' achievement; records of monitoring teaching and learning; and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Questionnaire returns from 33 staff were analysed.
- Inspectors took account of 61 responses to the online Parent View Questionnaire.

Inspection team

Helen Lane, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janet Pruchniewicz

Additional Inspector

Tudor Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Axholme Academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are White British; English is their first language.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is slightly below average. This funding is allocated to schools to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority and those who have a parent serving in the armed forces.
- The proportion of students supported by school action is lower than average but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above that seen nationally.
- The school uses the local fire service and 7KS in Scunthorpe to provide alternative learning opportunities for a very small number of students.
- School results in 2013 met the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of students at the end of Year 11.
- The Axholme Academy converted to be an academy school in January 2012. When its predecessor school North Axholme School was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress made by students in English, especially boys and disadvantaged students, so that it is at least as good as the progress they make in mathematics.
- Continue to improve the quality and consistency of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - developing the consistency of marking and other feedback so they are more regular and clearly identify what students need to do to improve their work and make even better progress
 - providing students with more regular opportunities to respond to marking and feedback
 - improving the consistency of effective questioning by members of staff in lessons so students are encouraged to give more detailed answers
 - implementing the findings of the review of the role of the teaching assistants so all provide consistent, well-focussed and targeted support.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The proportion of students leaving the school with five A* to C grades, including in mathematics and English, has improved since the academy opened. Given their starting points, students make good progress. Students entering the academy at the nationally expected level do particularly well.
- Students' progress in mathematics is outstanding. The proportion achieving an A* to C at GCSE is considerably above the national average. This is because teaching in mathematics is outstanding. The progress made by students in English is good but boys do make less progress than girls.
- The academy has made effective use of early entry in mathematics to raise attainment and increase progress. There are strategic plans in place to do so in English to enable students to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- In the majority of lessons students make good progress. Group progress files show how effectively teachers' planning is addressing the needs of individual students and identify those who need extra help. This additional information is allowing middle and senior leaders to pick up issues quickly and put in place strategies to deal with them.
- In 2012, there was a very small gap in the attainment of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those who are not. The gap was equivalent to half a grade. In 2013, the gap increased to a whole grade. The school has very good case studies on each student to explain this gap and data shows it will close again in 2014. The gap between students entitled to pupil premium and other students in other year groups is decreasing. However, it is bigger in English than in mathematics. Pupil premium students do better than their peers nationally, in both English and mathematics.
- The academy has a special focus on the most able students, including a well-attended evening for their parents. Nearly a third of the students gained three A or A* grades at GCSE in 2013. A greater than average number of more-able students make expected progress in English and mathematics. However, the proportion of students gaining the top grades is inconsistent across subjects.
- Year 7 catch up money was used to provide a two week summer school for Year 6 students. One aim of the summer school was to make the transition between primary school and the academy easier. A very positive outcome of the summer school is that the attendance of the students who attended it is higher than those who did not.
- The needs of the very small number of disabled students and those with special educational needs are being increasingly well met following the appointment of a new coordinator for these students. Overall, these students make the same good progress as their peers.
- The academy tests the reading ages of all students on entry, which highlights those students who require extra help. Individual support for those with weak literacy skills is proving effective in raising reading ages. Students say they enjoy reading. Literacy and mathematical skills are developed across the school. In many subjects, teachers include opportunities for students to develop their literacy skills through regular use of key words, opportunities for speaking and listening and extended writing.
- Good use is made of the alternative provision at 7KS and Humberside Fire and Rescue. A very small number of students are involved and at the fire service they gain Level 2 qualifications in Fire and Rescue Services and allied health and safety certificates. This provided a very effective pathway for one student who is now an apprentice for the fire service.

The quality of teaching is good

- Observations made during the inspection confirm the academy's view that teaching is good. In the majority of lessons observed, teaching was good with some that was outstanding. One of

the reasons why teaching is so effective is the positive relationships between staff and students.

- The high quality of teaching in mathematics has resulted in outstanding achievement. However, teaching in English has not had the same impact on students' progress as that in mathematics.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use it effectively to plan learning which engages students in a range of activities, including individual and group work, to help them make good progress. This was seen in a Year 7 art lesson where the students were absolutely absorbed in a game which checked their understanding of key words about colour, and encouraged them to use the words in extended sentences. The engaging activity helped them make very rapid progress, as well as extending their literacy skills.
- In some lessons, adults ask skilful questions which stretch students and challenge them to think deeply and give detailed answers. For example, in a Year 8 intervention group for literacy the higher level teaching assistant used skilful questioning to develop a deep understanding of the book students were reading. In other lessons, adults accept one word responses to questions. These do not extend, or check, the students' understanding carefully enough.
- Other adults in the classroom provide good support when they ask students structured questions and ensure the students understand what they have to do. Other adults are less effective when they give students too much help so they do not have to think.
- Scrutiny of students' work in lessons showed teachers are providing students with regular feedback on their work. The academy's 'triple impact marking' policy is used to provide students with comments that help them to improve. Some students are given opportunities to respond to this feedback, resulting in them making better progress. However, marking and feedback are not used consistently by all teachers and students are not always able to respond to feedback.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are very positive about the academy. They value the small family feel and the good relationships they have with each other and the academy's staff. Students behave very well around the school. However, their concentration in the small number of lessons which require improvement can waver. This is why behaviour is good and not outstanding.
- Older students respond very well to the leadership opportunities they have. Prefects undertake a range of duties very responsibly. Peer mentors from Key Stage 4 help younger students with friendship issues. Year 7 and Year 8 students say they value the peer mentors' help.
- The academy is a safe environment and students say they feel safe. They say all forms of bullying, including homophobic bullying, are very rare and that bullying would be dealt with effectively if it happened. The majority of parents agree the school deals effectively with bullying.
- Students understand how to stay safe and avoid risks. The academy provides information for them using links with the local community. For example, in an assembly, the local Police Officer spoke to Key Stage 4 students about keeping themselves and others safe with fireworks.
- Care and support for students is good. The academy knows which students are at risk of not doing well and there are strong systems to support them. As a result, these students are starting to make better progress.
- Students like, and understand the behaviour policy and say teachers use it consistently. The majority of parents, and all staff, agree with this.
- An inclusion room is used effectively to reduce fixed-term exclusions and provide students with a safe environment to consider their actions.
- The reward system is valued by the students. They like collecting stickers which they can exchange for prizes.
- Attendance rates compare well with national averages. The academy has high expectations, and effective strategies to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal's leadership is highly effective. He is reflective and considered in his approach and staff say they value the good communication they have with him. All staff, and the majority of parents who responded to Parent View, agree the school is well led and managed.
- The Principal is ably supported by the vice-principal and the assistant principal who have brought new rigour to the leadership of the school. The senior leadership team consistently communicate their vision, and share their high expectations and ambition, for the academy to be outstanding.
- Self-evaluation is thorough and in line with the findings of this inspection. Monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the academy's work are strengths of the leadership and management. Teaching is monitored through formal lesson observations, brief visits to lessons and the scrutiny of students' work. Achievement is tracked carefully so students who need extra help are identified quickly. There are clear plans in place to tackle the areas where achievement and teaching are not yet outstanding.
- There is a well organised system of line management. Middle leaders are closely involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the work of their teams and are held to account for their performance by senior leaders and governors. The leadership team are rightly focussing on those departments that need to improve to outstanding. The highly successful practice in the mathematics department is being shared by the assistant principal who is also the mathematics subject leader.
- An increased focus is now in place to support further pupil premium students through the employment of a core skills tutor, focussed extra help, and the opportunity for heads of department to bid for funding for projects to raise the achievement of these students. This is already having an impact and students entitled to the pupil premium are making good progress in the school.
- The robust performance management system, linked to the Teacher's Standards is understood well by teachers. It has been used to set high expectations and informs salary progression. As a result of this, and the training offered to teachers, including the recent training on outstanding teaching, the quality of teaching has improved and is now at least good, and in some departments, such as mathematics, outstanding.
- The academy considers the curriculum carefully so it offers broad and exciting opportunities to students. This year triple science has been introduced to offer more challenge to the most able. Individual advice and guidance is provided for all students so they can make good choices about the next stage in their education. The academy has good links with local further education colleges. Students say they enjoy the wide range of clubs and activities at lunchtime, and after school, including sports teams, as well as opportunities to visit foreign countries.
- There is a range of provision which supports the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in a Year 8 geography lesson the students evaluated the rights and wrongs of China's one child policy.
- The academy works closely with a school improvement partner who knows the academy well and contributes effectively to its self-evaluation processes.
- The academy is a strategic partner in the local teaching alliance. The Principal is a Local Leader of Education and chairs one of the committees in the partnership.
- Safeguarding requirements, including the single central record and recruitment procedures meet current standards.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the performance of the academy and the areas for development. The new Chair of the Governing Body is a 'force to be reckoned with' and has the same high aspirations as the senior leadership team for the academy to become outstanding. She has led the restructuring of the governing body to ensure their working practices are linked closely to academy improvement. These changes have improved the challenge and support offered by the governors. They are part of a panel with the school improvement partner and senior leaders which judges the effectiveness of each department in the academy. Governors are fully aware of the quality of teaching because they accompany

senior leaders on learning walks. The governing body fully understand the academy's financial position and the impact of additional spending to improve the achievement of pupil premium students. They are aware of the potential impact of the reduction in the school's roll and have planned the budget accordingly.

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	137759
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	426021

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	401
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dawn Da Costa
Principal	Joe Sellars
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01724 710368
Fax number	01724 711923
Email address	principal.theaxholmeacademy@northlincs.gov.uk

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