

Fulwood Academy

Black Bull Lane, Fulwood, Preston, Lancashire, PR2 9YR

Inspection dates 9–10 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Students do not make enough progress in mathematics and English. By the end of Year 11, attainment in mathematics is too low. In 2013, GCSE results in English fell and progress was inadequate.
- Most groups of students underachieve, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled students, those with special educational needs, and the most able.
- Teachers do not expect enough of students. Too often, the work set in lessons lacks challenge, especially in mathematics.
- Students lack confidence when speaking. In their written work, spelling, grammar and punctuation are often weak.
- Students are often slow to settle to work in lessons. Their attitudes to learning require improvement.
- Senior leaders have not taken enough notice of the poor progress made by students when checking on teaching in the academy.
- Not enough use is made of any available information about the progress of students so that action is taken to improve the performance of teachers.
- Students' achievement, and the academy's overall effectiveness, has declined since it was last inspected.
- The governing body has not been given accurate information about the effectiveness of teaching or how well the students are doing. This has compromised its ability to challenge senior leaders about whether students' achievement is improving quickly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The academy has ensured that students feel safe and that they conduct themselves around the academy in a calm and orderly manner.
- The academy, which includes students from many different minority ethnic backgrounds, is a harmonious community.
- The sixth form is improving. However, it requires improvement as teaching across the different subjects, and students' achievement, is patchy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made 35 visits to lessons. Four of the observations were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors analysed students' workbooks across a range of subjects.
- Discussions were held with staff, students and governors. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the sponsor of the academy.
- Documents looked at included the self-evaluation summary, an improvement plan, information on students' progress, records of students' behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the 14 responses to Parent View (the Ofsted online questionnaire), and through the academy's most recent survey of parents' views, from May 2013. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a parent.
- The views of staff were received and analysed through the 59 staff questionnaires returned.

Inspection team

Gillian Salter-Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Derek Davies	Additional Inspector
Fiona Burke-Jackson	Additional Inspector
Stephen Rowland	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures, because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Fulwood Academy became an academy in October 2009.
- The sixth form opened in September 2011.
- The academy moved into new buildings in September 2012.
- The academy is smaller than an average-sized secondary school.
- A well-above average proportion of students are supported through pupil premium. The pupil premium 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.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. An average proportion of students is supported at school action plus or has a statement of special educational needs.
- A well-above average proportion of students is from minority ethnic groups and speaks English as an additional language.
- A greater proportion of students join the academy after the start of Year 7 than in most schools, and many are in the very early stages of speaking English as an additional language.
- Alternative courses are provided for a small number of students at Preston College, Ashton School, Preston Vocational Centre and The Orchard Project based on the Archbishop Temple School site.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is at least good or better in order to accelerate progress quickly for all groups of students, especially in mathematics and English by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have consistently high expectations of students and set demanding tasks
 - staff use information on students' progress to check more rigorously that students are doing well enough
 - teachers plan lessons carefully to get the most out of all students, including the most able and those that need additional support
 - the pace and challenge of learning in lessons increases
 - teachers provide more opportunities for students to find things out for themselves and improve their independent learning skills
 - those students who require additional help with their learning receive effective support
 - that teachers' marking gives students useful guidance on how to improve in the subject.
- Raise standards, in mathematics and English, by making sure that:
 - learning for students in mathematics is practical and meaningful, and involves them in working things out for themselves
 - teachers adopt a consistent approach to improving students' skills in speaking, writing, spelling

and numeracy in subjects across the curriculum.

- Improve the effectiveness of senior and middle leaders, and bring greater urgency to the drive to improve achievement, by:
 - ensuring the accuracy of the academy’s self-evaluation, particularly in judging students’ progress and the impact of teaching on progress over time
 - improving the quality of teaching so that it is good enough to help students make up for prior underachievement
 - ensuring all teachers have high enough expectations of what students can achieve
 - ensuring that leaders track students’ progress more closely in order to identify underachievement more quickly
 - ensuring middle leaders are held accountable for the progress students make, and the effectiveness of teaching, in their areas of responsibility
 - making sure leaders of subjects hold class teachers to account for the progress students make
 - taking firm action to deal with any inadequate teaching.

 - Improve the effectiveness of the governing body by:
 - making sure that governors are fully informed about the effectiveness of teaching, and how well students are making progress, including in relation to national expectations
 - holding senior leaders more rigorously to account for the progress of all students and the impact of teaching on students’ progress over time
 - checking more closely on the use of pupil premium funding and fully challenging leaders on how well it is used to raise achievement
 - undertaking an external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the academy’s use of pupil premium funding, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- The proportion of students gaining five A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, at the end of Year 11 has been significantly below average since the previous inspection. Achievement across Years 7 to 11 is inadequate because too many students do not make the progress expected of them.
- Achievement in mathematics is inadequate. Students' attainment is low and progress in mathematics is inadequate across the different year groups. Unsuccessful approaches to teaching mathematics and an ineffective policy of early entry, and re-entry, to mathematics examinations have contributed to this and had a negative impact on students' attitudes to learning.
- Achievement in English is inadequate. Attainment and progress in English showed some improvement in 2012 and moved closer to national averages overall. However, this masked the underachievement of students such as the most able and those with special educational needs. In 2013, unvalidated GCSE results show that attainment in English fell and that most groups of students underachieved. Too few students in the current Years 7, 8 and 9 are making the expected progress.
- Students who speak English as an additional language, and students of Pakistani and Indian heritage, underachieve also. This is because the academy does not analyse the progress of different groups of students sufficiently. The information on students' progress is not used well enough to identify and tackle underachievement quickly.
- Government funding provided to help lower-attaining students in Year 7 to catch up is having a positive impact on these students' progress in their reading and mathematical skills. They are taught by specialist staff in a separate group for much of their time.
- Pupil premium funding is not used well enough to ensure that students known to be eligible for free school meals catch up to the performance of similar students nationally. In 2012, students known to be eligible for free school meals were more than half a grade behind other students in GCSE mathematics and English. As with other students, their achievement fell sharply in 2013 in both mathematics and English. Gaps in these students' attainment and progress, when compared to other students, are not closing quickly or consistently enough. The gaps in progress are wider in mathematics than in English.
- Pupil premium funding is also used to provide support for a small number of students who follow courses away from the academy site. Students' progress and attendance on these courses are checked carefully. Students benefit from the courses and most students complete them successfully, gaining appropriate qualifications. Their attendance at the academy and on the courses often improves.
- Scrutiny of written work, and lesson observation, show that many students lack confidence in speaking, and in writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation. They do not have sound numeracy skills. As a result many students do not have an adequate grasp of basic skills.
- Students make better progress in some subjects such as science, history, modern languages and religious education, with the most-able students achieving A* and A GCSE grades in these subjects. The overall proportion of students reaching A* and A grades is improving.
- Students' achievement in the sixth form is improving. There remains, however, variation in the achievement of students in vocational and academic subjects. Results in psychology are particularly strong. The proportion of students that stay on courses, and go on to take examinations, is below the national average. In 2013, the large majority of students gained a place at university.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- The impact of teaching on students' learning and progress over time is inadequate. Too many students make less than expected progress and teaching is ineffective in mathematics and English. During the inspection, too much teaching required improvement or was inadequate although some examples of good and outstanding teaching were seen.
- Teachers do not expect enough of students. They do not plan learning carefully enough to be sure that all students get the most out of lessons. The work set is not sufficiently challenging. This is especially the case in mathematics. If students are struggling with work, they do not always ask for help. In too many lessons, the pace of learning is slow.
- Staff do not check on students' progress well enough. As a result student's underachievement is not identified quickly enough and opportunities to accelerate progress are missed.
- Students are rarely encouraged to take the initiative. In too many lessons students are expected to copy out work, which does little to promote learning. There are few opportunities to discuss ideas or work things out for themselves.
- Teachers do not always pay close enough attention to improving students' skills in numeracy, oral communication, reading, writing, punctuation, spelling and grammar in different subjects.
- Few activities in mathematics capture students' interest. The relevance of the activities is not made clear. Practical approaches that engage students are not used often enough.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently give students useful guidance on how to improve in the subject and in their basic literacy skills. Students are not always expected to make improvements to their work in response to any guidance that is given.
- Support for disabled students and those with special educational needs is not always effective. While in some lessons, teaching assistants work well with individuals and encourage them to work hard, in others they do not get the help they need.
- Students learning English as an additional language, who are very new to the academy, are immersed in lessons. On a few occasions, these students make very little progress because no support was given by the teacher. When they receive specific support from adults, these students make good progress.
- Teaching across subjects in the sixth form is not always good. There is unevenness in achievement between subjects.
- In some subjects, teachers expect a great deal of students. Good subject knowledge is used to challenge all students and to deepen their students' understanding. In these lessons, students are engaged well and enjoy learning. They are not afraid to ask for help when they need it.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Many students lack confidence. They do not readily seek the help of others when they do not understand their work.
- Attendance is broadly average. Attendance for the current term shows an improvement on the previous year. The attendance of students known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled students and those with special educational needs is improving and getting closer to the national average.
- Most students feel safe and secure in the academy. They know about different types of bullying. They say that the small amount of bullying that happens is usually sorted out. Most students are happy that adults in the academy will help them if they need support. A few students are less confident that the support they need is there.
- Students' behaviour and conduct in most lessons and around the academy is usually good. Students understand and respect the academy's expectations of behaviour and conduct. The dining area is calm and orderly. The learning resource centre is used sensibly by many students for additional study.
- Students know how to keep themselves safe in many different circumstances, including when using the internet. The academy carries out careful checks to ensure that students following

courses away from the academy site are kept safe.

- The academy has worked successfully to establish clear and high expectations of behaviour and conduct. Most students respect these expectations and many have noticed improvements; fixed-period exclusions have been high but are now reducing.
- Sixth-form students have a mature approach to their studies. They value highly the support they receive from staff. They appreciate the wide range of additional activities and challenges open to them.
- Most parents responding to recent academy surveys have no major concerns about the behaviour and safety of students and the way the academy handles incidents of bullying.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Senior and middle leaders have not been effective in quickly raising students' achievement across the academy. Students' achievement, the quality of teaching, and leadership and management have all declined since the academy was last inspected. Leaders do not demonstrate the capacity to improve the academy.
- Senior leaders do not have a realistic enough understanding of the academy's performance. Their evaluation does not take into account the progress of all students, including different groups, and across both key stages. Insufficient analysis of students' progress has led to a lack of understanding as to when students are underachieving.
- Not enough has been done to improve teaching in English and mathematics. The academy's own view of its teaching is generous and does not take into account the impact of teaching over time on students' progress. Senior leaders do not scrutinise the performance of individual teachers by looking at students' progress. Training programmes to support individual staff have been established but these have not yet been checked for their impact. Only some senior and middle leaders have the confidence to share good practice.
- While the academy-improvement plans identify what needs to be done, action taken is recent and has not yet had an impact on students' progress. For example, a system for tracking students' progress more accurately is being implemented and targets for individual students are more challenging. However, the system is very new and confusing for many staff and middle leaders. Similarly, classes in Key Stage 4 mathematics have been reorganised recently and a new curriculum in Year 7, which sets higher expectations for Key Stage 3, has just started.
- The academy has tried to reduce the amount of weak teaching. However, too much requires improvement and some is inadequate. Inspectors recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers until there is sufficient support available for them.
- Generally, heads of subjects have not been proactive in driving improvements forward. They do not have a clear overview of the priorities for improvement. They have not held class teachers to account for students' progress. Furthermore, heads of subject have not been held sufficiently to account by senior leaders for the progress of all the students in their subject.
- Activities provided through the academy sponsorship, such as staff visits to other schools, have not led to systematic improvement or ensured students' achievement improves quickly. External guidance has not led to the urgent action needed to raise achievement.
- The curriculum does not meet all students' needs. A traditional range of subjects is followed in Key Stage 3 but the level of challenge is insufficient and has not prepared students for work in Key Stage 4. A new curriculum for Year 7 students has been introduced, which is expected to provide greater challenge and better preparation for Key Stage 4. The Key Stage 4 curriculum has been developed to encourage more students to take the English Baccalaureate subjects. While a balance of vocational and academic subjects meets the needs of most students, there is not enough flexibility in choices for some students.
- Academy leaders have been successful in improving attendance, behaviour, conduct, and ensuring a safe environment. The academy has increased the involvement of parents in supporting their children's behaviour, attitudes and attendance. These improvements have been achieved during a period of turbulence that involved a move into new academy buildings.

Parents recognise that the academy has improved in some aspects of its work.

- Leadership of the sixth form is good and is leading to a rapid improvement in students' achievement. Students appreciate the advice and guidance they receive, which supports their decision-making about the future. Teaching in the sixth form has improved as a result of more rigorous monitoring although it remains patchy in some subjects. The sixth-form curriculum is developing quickly in order to meet students' different needs. There are good opportunities for students to improve on Level 2 qualifications in English and mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors do not have a clear understanding of students' progress, including in relation to national expectations, nor do they receive accurate information about the quality of teaching. Consequently, they do not question senior leaders rigorously about teaching and the achievement of students. They have not checked closely on how effective the pupil premium spending has been in raising achievement for eligible students.
 - Performance management of senior leaders has not led to rapid improvement in teaching and achievement. Governors have supported academy leaders in tackling the weakest teaching but there remains too much teaching that is not yet good enough.
 - Governors have supported the progress the academy has made in becoming a safe, welcoming supportive environment. Safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements.

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	135936
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	426196

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	774
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Goldie
Principal	Richard Smyth
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2011
Telephone number	01772 719060
Fax number	01772 713573
Email address	info@fulwoodacademy.co.uk

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