

# Tudor Grange Academy Worcester

Bilford Road, Worcester, WR3 8HN

**Inspection dates** 19–20 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students make good progress. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A\* to C grades including English and mathematics has risen over the last three years to be above average.
- Teaching is good in the large majority of lessons and some is outstanding. This is having a positive impact on the attainment and progress of students.
- Teachers are eager to improve their performance through sharing good practice and undertaking training, which has a direct impact on students' learning. They actively help students to achieve well.
- The sixth form is good. It is a popular choice for students at age 16. They make good progress as a result of good teaching and effective guidance.
- The academy provides very effective support to help students improve their reading, writing and speaking so that their literacy skills do not hold back their learning in other subjects. The results are impressive and most students talk confidently about their learning.
- The behaviour of students and their attitudes to learning are usually exemplary. They show high levels of respect and courtesy towards each other and to their teachers. Their excellent attitudes to learning have a strong impact on the rapid progress they are making.
- Senior leaders and governors have a relentless focus on building high standards through driving continued improvement of teaching and students' achievement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding because work is not always closely matched to students' different abilities.
- Much marking of students' work is helpful, but some does not tell them clearly enough how to improve.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons taught by 43 teachers. Three of the observations were shared with the academy’s senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to students read and evaluated the quality of students’ work in lessons. Inspectors visited different areas of the academy site, including the foundation-learning provision, and saw staff delivering sessions to develop and improve students’ literacy skills.
- Meetings were held with senior and other leaders and three members of the governing body. They also spoke to the Executive Principal of the academy trust and three different groups of students.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 44 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered the views expressed by parents in the academy’s own internal surveys. Inspectors also read the responses completed by 24 members of staff and one letter sent by a parent.
- The inspection team analysed the academy’s published examination results as well as the academy’s own analysis of its performance and its plans for improvement. They looked at: records of the quality of teaching and students’ progress, lesson plans, and minutes of meetings, including those of the governing body. Inspectors also considered information on safeguarding of students and records of students’ behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Huw Bishop, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alan Lee

Additional Inspector

Michael Rose

Additional Inspector

Roisin Chambers

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The academy is smaller-than the-average-sized secondary school.
- The large majority of students are White British.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and some other groups.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than the national average.
- Six students currently attend off-site provision through the Aspire Consortium and Worcester Youth Development Centre. The courses are work-related opportunities which supplement the students' studies in English and mathematics which are delivered by the academy.
- An alternative, personalised pathway – the foundation programme – to support students with social or behavioural needs is delivered by teaching staff at the academy. This is closely linked with normal day-to-day classes.
- The academy is sponsored and supported by Tudor Grange Academy, Solihull.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 4.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use the outstanding practice already in the academy to improve the quality of teaching to be consistently outstanding, and raise further students' achievement, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - make frequent use of the very informative data on students' attainment and progress that is available to plan lessons matched to all students' different abilities and starting points
  - always use the marking of students' work to advise them how to improve it, and give them time to respond to the guidance provided.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the academy with low prior attainment. Over the last three years, their progress has accelerated and, consequently, their attainment has risen impressively. For example, in 2013, preliminary results of students gaining five GCSE grades A\* to C including English and mathematics compared well with the latest available national figures.
- Students are making much better progress in English and mathematics. After steady improvement to 2012, students' progress accelerated with improved teaching, and continues to improve. Inspectors verified a strong rate of progress in students' recent work and their progress seen in lessons during the inspection.
- The most-able students achieve well. For example, they gained high GCSE grades in English in 2012 and 2013. Recent results in science have also shown significant improvement. The academy's current, detailed tracking of students' progress and attainment suggest continued improvement in 2014.
- The pupil premium funding has supported eligible students through a range of activities such as extra tuition and visits, as well as individual help from learning mentors. This support has increased the levels of engagement and enjoyment of eligible students and resulted in closing the gap between their attainment and that of their classmates in the academy. In 2012, the difference in attainment of this group and that of other students was two and one half GCSE grades. In 2013, the gap between eligible students' attainment and that of others closed impressively to just one third of one grade in both English and mathematics. This represents exceptional achievement for this group of students.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve well. They make good progress because they are taught well and supported by their teachers. By Year 11, they achieve appropriate work-related qualifications in line with their abilities. The proportion of these students who also achieve five A\* to C grades in English and mathematics is increasing and is now much closer to the achievement of their classmates.
- The academy enters some students early for GCSE examinations when it believes they are academically ready for the challenge. This practice speeds the progress of more-able students and does not limit any student's potential to succeed.
- Any students who join the academy other than at the usual times receive considerable support to help them to make progress in line with the academy's expectations. Consequently, they achieve in line with other students.
- The academy has a wide range of activities to improve students' reading and literacy skills. The Year 7 catch-up funding is used to pay for extra sessions in English and mathematics, but this is extended also to support literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. In the foundation programme, students who struggle with literacy and numeracy benefit from a programme that is highly tailored to their learning needs and abilities, with a daily focus on numeracy and literacy. The impact on students' progress and reading ability enables them to make good progress.
- Provision off-site for the few students who pursue work-related opportunities there is monitored carefully. The students make good progress and achieve well.

- Students make good progress in the sixth form and their attainment is improving rapidly. From starting points that have often been lower than those of most students beginning advanced courses nationally, their achievement in academic and work-related subjects is good. Those students who have not attained grade C or above in English and mathematics at the end of Year 11 are re-entered successfully for the examination as part of their studies in Year 12. Most students attend regularly and conclude their courses successfully.
- By the time students leave the sixth form, their attainment is above the national average on A-level and, especially, vocational courses (BTEC). The range of learning opportunities on offer in the sixth form ensures that students' interests and abilities are catered for and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education or career path.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teaching ensures successful learning and good progress across the academy. It is, correctly, regarded by the highly committed staff as 'the most important thing we do'.
- In most lessons, students are keen to learn and make good progress. Teaching is well organised and planned, and teachers make clear to students what they are going to learn. Teachers are determined that students will achieve well. Staff have considerable subject expertise and their enthusiasm engages students fully in their learning.
- Teachers usually check how well students are progressing at many points in lessons. Students generally have opportunities to reflect on how well they are learning, and teachers' knowledge of individual students' abilities is, in most situations, a notable strength of teaching. Students are usually set targets and given work which demand they aim high. For example, outstanding teaching in a Year 11 English lesson with higher-ability students on *Of Mice and Men* challenged students to evaluate the text against a range of criteria in order to explore how effectively the author used the situation described in his work. Students' responses were mature, articulate and they were able to offer alternative views as well as their own. This enabled them to make considerable gains in their ability to evaluate and review their opinions and so they made rapid progress.
- Students say they are well taught and enjoy their lessons. The positive relationships between students and teachers and among students themselves make them keen to learn.
- Teaching assistants are used well across all subjects and give helpful support and encouragement to students of all abilities, as well as those who require more help to ensure that they develop skills and achieve well. Those who require significant support receive specific individual help within the foundation-learning programme.
- Teaching in the sixth form is never less than good and is usually better. Discussions with students repeatedly emphasised the positive effect they felt that their teachers have on their learning. This view was summarised by the comment, 'The teachers here don't realise how good they are; not so much about them, but about the impact they have on our lives.' The quality of teachers' work in the sixth form is checked regularly by subject and senior leaders, and the progress of students is reviewed every half term. Students say that the care and learning guidance they are offered by their teachers are good and the evidence observed by inspectors in students' files showed that teachers' marking and assessment of students' work help them to improve and achieve well.
- The quality of marking is mostly good and provides students with clear and specific written

comments that tell them what they need to do to improve. However, this practice is not consistently applied in all subjects, and students do not always have time to act on the guidance given.

- The academy has focused strongly on improving the quality of teaching and has removed most weaknesses. However, teaching is not yet outstanding because students do not always make the progress they are capable of when work is not matched closely enough to their abilities and specific learning needs. In these situations, students also do not have the chance to reflect on what they are learning. More-successful teaching is challenging for all abilities, including the more able, who have additional, demanding tasks that match their talents.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The academy is a calm and orderly learning environment. Students are polite and well mannered. They are courteous towards each other and to visitors.
- Students' behaviour in lessons in and around the academy is outstanding. They are exceptionally keen to learn and participate fully in lessons. Their commitment and enthusiasm have contributed greatly to the improvements in the standards they have achieved over the last three years. Where learning is best, they consistently work without the teachers' help and persevere with learning even when it is hard.
- Students say that their teachers work hard on their behalf and that partnership helps them to make good progress. Students' outstanding behaviour makes a notable difference to learning. They work together very well and learn from each other. Even where teaching is not as strong, students almost always concentrate and make good progress because they are highly motivated to succeed.
- Discussions with students showed that they feel safe in the academy and know how to keep themselves safe in various situations. They learn how to use the internet safely and learn about the dangers associated with drugs and alcohol. Bullying is rare but, when it happens, it is dealt with quickly and effectively.
- The academy has a clear behaviour policy which is understood by students. They say it is fair and helps them to understand the importance of self-discipline in their learning and personal actions. They are helped to understand the importance of respect and courtesy, and show these in all relationships.
- Parents who responded to Parent View think that their children are very safe at the academy, well looked after and behave well. Without exception, they agreed that they would recommend the academy to other parents.
- An extensive range of opportunities for students to develop as responsible individuals is provided by the academy alongside after-school activities as an additional period at the end of the formal school day. Students enthusiastically take up the opportunities provided. In one of these, a student had won a letter-writing competition with the prize of a trip to Everest base camp.
- Attendance is currently above average and has improved consistently over the last three years. There are effective strategies to promote regular attendance. Exclusions have reduced rapidly in line with improvements in teaching and the progress made by students.
- The behaviour of students in the sixth form is outstanding. The support and opportunities

offered in the sixth form were described by students as having a significant impact on their personal, social and employability skills, and their development as young people. They actively look out for younger students who may need help and support; some sixth form students formally mentor younger students.

## **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The Principal has been highly successful in giving students the best possible learning experiences. She has clear aims to take students' achievement and the quality of teaching further forward.
- Considerable improvements to teaching and learning have been made by leaders and governors since the previous inspection. The transformation is demonstrated by the rapid improvement in achievement, students' exceptionally positive attitudes to learning, and the excellent quality of relationships that teachers and students enjoy and appreciate. This impressive track record of improvement demonstrates the school's very strong capacity for further improvement in teaching and achievement.
- Leaders have taken very effective action to improve the quality of teaching through a carefully planned programme of training and development for all teachers and other adults. This programme is carefully adjusted to ensure that it meets the learning needs of all students and is monitored carefully to ensure that it is always fit for purpose. However, opportunities to share the best practice in teaching and learning within the academy are not always shared well enough. Consequently, some teachers have not yet become consistently outstanding in their practice.
- All aspects of teachers' performance are scrutinised carefully and robustly, including lesson observations and evidence of students' achievement. Leaders maintain a close link between the work teachers do and demanding targets linked to students' achievement. Teachers' pay reflects their success in helping students to make progress and achieve. The Principal is not afraid to make staff changes to improve the quality of teaching.
- Clear improvement priorities have been communicated to all staff by the Principal and senior leaders. These priorities are shared and supported by subject leaders, all of whom are highly effective in carrying through their individual responsibilities. Subject leaders contribute very well to the academy's advances in teaching quality and students' achievement. There is a carefully focused programme of training and support to help leaders below senior level become more effective and these leaders have gained greatly from it. Training opportunities enable all subject leaders and teachers to enhance their skills so they can do their best for students.
- The impact of the relationship with Tudor Grange Academy in Solihull has enabled excellence to be shared in order to improve learning at the academy. However, this excellence is now shared both ways because of the academy's successes, to the mutual benefit of both communities.
- The curriculum meets the needs and interests of students. There is a good range of academic and practical subjects available. Students value the helpful advice and guidance that is offered to enable them to select subjects appropriate to their abilities and interests. Off-site provision is regularly visited and monitored to ensure it is safe, effective and helpful to the students involved. Low levels of literacy on entry to the academy required an effective, long-term approach to ensure that students could make rapid progress. This initiative is now impacting well on the achievement of all students.
- The academy works successfully with parents and the local community and there is a growing

confidence in the academy's ability to provide high-quality education for all students.

- The academy ensures that students benefit from an innovative curriculum which meets their individual interests and learning needs. There is a good balance of academic and work-related options available, which is reviewed carefully to ensure that students have opportunities which enable all to progress to further study or training. Educational and vocational guidance is very helpful to students in making choices throughout all their years at the academy and, especially, at age 16 and in the sixth form.
- The extensive and impressive range of learning opportunities promote students' understanding of spiritual, moral and cultural issues. A 'skills action services' (SAS) each week provides students with opportunities to pursue personal choice and develop a sense of service and citizenship. Elements of developing students' personal skills are also evident in lessons. For example, in history, students were evaluating the main weaknesses of the League of Nations, by comparing it to the immediate response of the United Nations to the recent Philippines tragedy to illustrate the difference in the exercise of personal and international responsibility over the last century. Similarly, the use of 'circle time' in the academy's programme of personalised-curriculum pathways gives students a structured opportunity to reflect on their own behaviours and self-awareness to raise their self-esteem. These excellent learning opportunities give each individual student an equal chance to succeed.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. Current strategies are clearly focused on enabling students to achieve their best standard, in many cases from low starting points.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding meet national requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The academy has a highly skilled and experienced governing body that fulfils its statutory duties very effectively. Governors have detailed knowledge of teaching and the levels of students' progress. They have clear procedures to monitor the academy's effectiveness and hold leaders to account, including setting targets for the Principal and all teachers to improve their work. Governors have ensured that they have the necessary expertise to ask searching questions of leaders. Although they are committed to the academy's success, they are also realistic and astute in their understanding of the academy's current performance and its ambitious planning for the future.
  - Governors visit regularly and are known to staff and students. They know how the pupil premium and other targeted funding is spent and are clear about its impact on the progress of eligible students. Governors are robust in defending the needs of individual students within the academy community and are vocal advocates through dialogue with the local authority and other agencies in support of those needs. The governing body's strong relationship with leaders and others in the academy community enables them to work effectively within the current academy-trust arrangements.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135913
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	427048

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	888
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	102
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Rock
<b>Principal</b>	Claire Maclean
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 February 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01905 454627
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