

# Grace Academy Coventry

Wigston Road, Coventry, CV2 2RH

**Inspection dates** 29–30 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders, managers and governors have been slow to take action to improve the academy's effectiveness.
- Standards are low. The proportion of students gaining five GCSE grades at A\* to C including English and mathematics is below average.
- Much teaching is uninspiring and fails to motivate and interest the students. As a result, their progress is slow.
- Teachers' performance has not been rigorously managed. As a result, they have not received the training they need to improve their skills.
- In many subjects students are taught by a succession of temporary teachers who do not have good enough subject knowledge to ensure that students learn well.
- The additional government funding that the academy receives for some disadvantaged students is not being used well enough to raise their attainment.
- Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are too low. As a result, the work teachers set for students is too easy or too hard.
- Teachers do not give students enough opportunities to improve their reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- The quality of marking varies too much between subjects and comments on students' work do not give them enough guidance how to improve their work.
- Inattentiveness, low-level disruption and poor behaviour often slow learning and hinder progress in lessons.
- A large number of students are excluded from the academy for short periods of time because of their poor behaviour.
- The sixth-form is inadequate. Students do not achieve well enough and the courses offered are not suited to their academic abilities.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new Interim Principal has quickly analysed what needs to happen for the academy to improve. He has already started to tackle weak leadership and teaching.
- Sixth Form students are well behaved and provide positive role models for younger students.
- The 'Values Days' make a positive contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 38 lessons, four of which were seen jointly with senior leaders. They also visited tutor periods, made short visits to lessons, attended an assembly, observed behaviour during lunch and break times, and visited activities taking place during the Year 9 'Values Day'.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders, teachers, five representatives of the governing body and the headteacher of one of the schools supporting the academy.
- Inspectors talked to many students about their learning and life at the academy. They held formal meetings with four groups of students and reviewed their work in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 questionnaires completed by staff and the 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspection team observed the academy's work and reviewed current data about students' achievement; examined records relating to safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, exclusions and attendance; and looked at documents used by leaders in monitoring and reviewing the academy's work, including self-evaluation and improvement plans.

## Inspection team

Frances Le Pla, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Gaffney

Additional Inspector

Helen Booth

Additional Inspector

Terence Payne

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, 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

- Grace Academy Coventry is part of the Grace Academy Multi Academy Trust, which consists of three secondary schools in the Midlands.
- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British. The proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are similar to national figures.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding to support particular groups of students such as those known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care) is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- In Years 10 and 11, 12, students access off-site provision in Coventry as part of the vocational courses they are studying. Two Year 11 students attend for three days a week and the other students attend for one day a week. They attend Henley College, Belgrade Theatre, Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry Building Works, Learn2, CWT and The Coombe.
- The academy is part of the local North East sixth form federation, and five students travel to other schools for some of their courses.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy is being supported by two other academies, Sponne Academy and Whitley Abbey Academy.
- The Interim Principal has been leading the academy since the beginning of January 2014.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching throughout the academy so that it is good or better by:
  - ensuring that all teaching motivates and inspires students
  - providing training for temporary teachers to improve their subject knowledge and skills, and ensure that they are well-prepared for their lessons
  - raising expectations of how students behave and what they can achieve
  - ensuring teachers give students opportunities to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills in interesting contexts in a range of subjects
  - making sure that students' work is marked in a way that gives them clear guidance about how it can be improved.
- Improve behaviour and reduce the number of students who are temporarily excluded from school by ensuring that all staff understand and consistently apply the academy's expectations for good behaviour.

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - the systems for collecting, analysing and acting on data about students' progress are consistently applied across the academy
  - spending of additional government funding (pupil premium) is used effectively to raise the attainment of those pupils it is intended to support
  - staffing is stabilised so that students have greater continuity in their learning
  - all leaders are rigorously held to account for the performance of all groups of students so that they are able to drive forward improvements in teaching, learning and behaviour
  - courses offered to sixth-form students meet their academic needs
  - governors regularly and rigorously hold academy leaders to account for all aspects of performance and check that actions taken are leading to improvements.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the academy's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and governance may be improved.

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## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Students are not making enough progress. Achievement in English and mathematics is inadequate because many students, especially boys, those supported by the pupil premium and the most able, do not make the progress expected of them between Year 7 and Year 11.
- Students join the school in Year 7 with attainment that is typically just below average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2012, the proportion of pupils that attained five or more GCSE A\* to C grades including English and mathematics improved from the previous year. However, results fell sharply in 2013, and were well below the national average in both English and mathematics.
- In 2013, standards in science, design and technology, religious studies, French and Spanish were also below average. Very few students achieved the highest A\* and A grades. Students do better in some courses, such as business studies and physical education, where they achieve average standards. The academy no longer enters students early for GCSE examinations.
- Achievement is not improving. This is because the teaching is not good enough and the academy has been too slow to identify the students that need additional help to make faster progress.
- Pupil premium funding is not used well enough to raise the attainment of disadvantaged students. In 2013, their attainment in Year 11 was a grade behind other students in GCSE English and mathematics. These students make slower progress than their classmates. As a result, the gap has not narrowed. Leaders have not checked the progress of these students closely enough or used the additional funding to provide extra support where it is needed.
- Similarly, Year 7 'catch up' funding has not been used well enough to support younger students who struggle with mathematics, reading, writing and spelling. As a result, they do not make enough progress in mastering these important skills in order to catch up with their peers. Across all years, many students continue to have weak skills in mathematics, reading, writing and spelling because teachers do not do enough to help them practise and extend these skills in a range of subjects.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similarly inadequate progress because the work they are given in lessons is often not match well-enough to their abilities.
- The progress of students who attend education in other locations to study work-related courses is monitored regularly. They make steady progress on their courses.
- In the sixth form, too few students achieve a good level of success at AS and A level. This is because some students are not taking courses that are the most appropriate for them when their results at GCSE are taken into account.

### The quality of teaching

### is inadequate

- Too much teaching is inadequate. As a result, students do not learn quickly enough. Although there is some good teaching, there is not enough to develop students' literacy, numeracy and communication skills so that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education or

training.

- In too many subjects, students are taught by a succession of different temporary teachers. This slows students' learning because these teachers often do not have good enough subject knowledge. In addition, subject leaders do not make sure that temporary teachers are well prepared for lessons. For example, in an information and communication technology (ICT) lesson taken by a temporary teacher, the class did very little work because the teacher did not know how to find the lesson plan on the network.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what students can achieve. Too often students are asked to complete unexciting activities that are either too easy or too hard for them. As a result, students, especially those who have special educational needs, often become bored and restless. When the teachers ask questions, they too readily accept simple responses from students without pushing them to think or reflect on what they have learned.
- In too many lessons, low-level disruption, lack of concentration, social chatting and calling out are allowed to continue without being challenged by the teacher. Teachers do not consistently follow the academy's guidelines for dealing with poor behaviour. As a result, time is wasted, the pace of learning slows down and very little work is done. Many classrooms are uninspiring places, with few ICT resources, displays of work, or information about the subject to interest and engage students.
- Despite the recent introduction of new guidance, marking remains inconsistent. Few teachers provide helpful comments or examples showing students how work can be improved. Some teachers' comments do not give the students a clear enough guide about the standard of the work they are producing. Consequently, students do not know how well they are doing in some subjects.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers have high expectations of students' behaviour and learning and students are stimulated to think hard. In a science lesson where the inspector judged teaching to be outstanding, the teacher had high expectations of behaviour and showed great enthusiasm for the subject. As a result, students were interested, excited, behaved well and were keen to learn. Well-structured tasks pushed the students to think carefully and test out their predictions so that, by the end of the lesson, they had made rapid progress in their understanding of osmosis.
- Teaching in sixth form lessons is often stronger than in the rest of the academy because teachers have better subject knowledge. However, too little attention has been paid to keeping an eye on students' progress and, as a result, they have not achieved as well as they should over their time in the sixth form.

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

- Students' behaviour is inadequate. Students do not behave well enough in lessons because teaching does not capture their interest and teachers do not insist on high standards of behaviour. Parents and staff expressed their concerns about behaviour in the academy and inspectors agree that poor behaviour is slowing students' progress and their learning in many lessons.
- Students are often slow to settle to their work, and some are not eager to learn. Many are easily distracted and chatter when they are supposed to be working, especially if the lesson is not very interesting. Homework is often not completed and work in books is untidy. This contrasts with

students' enthusiasm and engagement in the lessons that they find interesting.

- The number of students not allowed to attend the academy for short periods of time, because of their poor behaviour, is too high and remains well above national levels.
- Attendance has improved considerably over recent years and is now close to the national average. However, there are still groups of students, often those eligible for support through the pupil premium funding, who do not attend regularly enough.
- Students enjoy being part of mixed-age tutor groups. Younger students say that it helps them to settle well in their new school and get to know older students. Across the academy, there are very few opportunities for students to take on responsibility. Students of all ages said they would like more opportunities for their 'voice' to be heard.
- The academy's work to keep students safe requires improvement. Students are well-informed about how to stay safe. They understand the harm that racist or homophobic name-calling can cause and they know what to do if it happens to them.
- Parents expressed concerns about the way that the academy deals with bullying. Students report that bullying does occur and that, although it is dealt with, sometimes staff take too long to stop it or are inconsistent in the way they tackle it.
- Students in the sixth form are well behaved and conduct themselves well around the academy. They provide positive role models for younger students.

### **The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Leaders and managers have not done enough to tackle the declining performance of the academy. Systems to check the quality of teaching and students' progress have not been thorough and evaluations have been overly optimistic. Although weak teaching was identified, it was not adequately addressed and too little was done to manage teachers' performance. Leaders and managers did not do enough to instil high expectations of behaviour or ensure that bullying was dealt with swiftly.
- Until recently, teachers and subject leaders were not held to account for the performance of students in their care and little was done to identify and share good practice or help teachers to improve their skills. Use of additional resources, such as the pupil premium funding, has not been well planned and, as a result, has had no impact on raising the attainment of disadvantaged students.
- The Interim Principal has accurately identified what the academy needs to do to improve. He has moved swiftly to begin to deal with inadequate teaching. A strong partnership has been established with the schools supporting Grace Academy to ensure that teachers are given help to improve. For example, Year 11 'mock exam' papers in English and mathematics have been reviewed by another school to make sure that teachers at the academy have accurately judged the standards of students' work.
- The Interim Principal is beginning to strengthen leadership at the academy. He has introduced a system to track and analyse the progress of students so that those who are falling behind can be quickly identified and given additional support.
- As a result of the recent work of the Interim Principal, senior leaders and managers are now

becoming more involved in improving teaching and learning. For example, at the time of the inspection, senior leaders led a staff training session on good-quality marking. More rigorous systems for checking the work of subject leaders are being established. However, these improvements are at a very early stage of implementation. Consequently, the academy has not demonstrated sufficient capacity to improve.

- It is strongly recommended that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- Leadership of the sixth form is inadequate. In 2013, the number of students staying on to the sixth form dropped dramatically because leaders did not ensure the courses on offer were well matched to their academic needs. For example, there were no courses available for students who needed to continue to study GCSE English and mathematics after completing Year 11.
- Assemblies and 'Values Days' effectively promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Year 9 students greatly enjoyed the recent day on the theme 'I have a choice' because it made them think about self-esteem, peer pressure and relationships. In lessons, students' disruptive behaviour and inattentiveness often limits other opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have not been effective in challenging the academy's leaders and, until recently, they have not been sufficiently aware of its strengths and weaknesses or the quality of teaching. Pay awards were given when they were not warranted. Governors took too long to arrest the decline in results because they were too reliant on the information given to them and did not find out things for themselves. They knew how much Pupil Premium funding was received but did not do enough to check on what the money was spent or ask for evidence that it was improving students' achievement. Governors are now taking much firmer action to hold leaders and teachers to account. They have strengthened leadership by appointing an Interim Principal and by enlisting support from two other academies. They have established an improvement board which regularly checks the impact of the external support, and the progress being made against the new academy action plan. They have commissioned a review to help them improve their effectiveness. The governing body makes sure that the academy's arrangements for safeguarding students meet 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135335
<b>Local authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	433303

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<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>	880
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	49
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Burton (from 30 January 2014)
<b>Principal</b>	Colin Boxall (Interim Principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	024 7658 9000
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