

# City of Peterborough Academy, Special School

Reeves Way, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE1 5LQ

**Inspection dates** 26–27 February 2014

| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b> <b>2</b>     |
| 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.

- Senior staff, the trust and the advisory council have high aspirations for pupils' academic and personal development, and insist on high levels of performance from staff.
- As a newly-opened academy, the strategic decisions taken over the initial 18 months have systematically developed teaching and strengthened leadership, placing the academy in a good position to fulfil future plans.
- Pupils' participation in lessons is good because teachers and support staff make sure that some pupils' more difficult behaviour does not get in the way of learning.
- Support staff make a significant contribution to good teaching.
- Pupils of all ages make good academic progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and calm.
- Pupils and parents are very positive about how the staff help them to improve their learning and behaviour.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' personal development is not targeted rigorously enough.
- Checks on pupils' learning and personal development are not always carried out systematically by teachers.
- A few pupils are not yet fully integrated into their class group.

## Information about this inspection

- The Principal was notified of this inspection on the afternoon before the inspection started.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, Deputy Principal, the Assistant Principal, teaching assistants, learning mentors, teachers, the bursar, the occupational therapist, the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Principal of Greenwood Dale Trust, pupils and parents.
- There is no online Parent View questionnaire for the academy, so a paper copy was circulated and 13 parents responded. Their views were considered alongside the 27 responses to the questionnaire for staff.
- Parts of 16 lessons were observed, 14 jointly with senior staff.
- The academy’s monitoring of teaching and pupils’ learning, and pupils’ books were scrutinised.
- A range of policies, plans and minutes of meetings were scrutinised, including the academy’s evaluation of its performance and the school improvement plan.
- The single central record was checked.

## Inspection team

Heather Yaxley, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Kathleen Yates

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Department for Education has conducted four monitoring visits and the most recent visit was in December 2013.
- The academy opened as a free school in September 2012 in temporary accommodation, and moved into purpose-built premises in June 2013 on the same site as City of Peterborough Academy.
- The academy is one of 23 run by Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust.
- The trust is responsible for governance and statutory responsibilities, and an advisory council provides non-statutory challenge and support.
- The Principal was appointed in February 2013, the Assistant Principal in June 2013 and the Deputy Principal in January 2014.
- There are currently pupils from the Reception Year to Year 8.
- Each pupil has a statement of special educational needs for autism.
- Almost half of the pupils are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care or with a parent in the armed services), which is much higher than the national average.
- The school has only received its primary school sport funding allocation recently.
- Very few pupils speak English as an additional language and a below average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- Boys outnumber girls nine to one.
- The academy does not make use of off-site alternative provision.

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

- Improve the quality of assessment within teaching by:
  - using individual targets for pupils' learning and behaviour in lesson plans so that activities and resources stretch pupils according to their needs and starting points
  - providing pupils with helpful written information about how teachers expect them to improve their work in subsequent lessons
  - making good use of the classroom environment to prompt and support pupils' learning.
- Improve the quality of assessment within strategic leadership by:
  - using targets for pupils' academic and personal outcomes in improvement plans to carefully measure the impact of the actions taken
  - targeting, monitoring and tracking pupils' personal development systematically, including their communication skills
  - extending tracking and evaluating pupils achievements to all subjects
  - making behaviour plans easier to use and easier for staff to check their effectiveness.
- Improve the curriculum by:
  - using data to identify and plan additional support for those individuals and groups who are not making as much progress as they could
  - making sure pupils practise their academic, social and communication skills in relevant real-life settings more often

- completing teaching and learning plans in preparation for Key Stage 4 students.
  
- Make sure that all pupils integrate with their class groups successfully for as much time as possible.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Over the past 18 months, pupils have made good academic progress from their individual starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improvements in pupils' behaviour, alongside high aspirations from staff for them to do well, help pupils focus on learning and make up for past underachievement.
- Data for the autumn term show that pupils who are at the academy for the longest time make the most progress.
- Some pupils attain as highly as those in mainstream schools and most work at National Curriculum levels close to those expected for all pupils nationally within each key stage for literacy and numeracy.
- Targets for pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics are challenging and tracked well but information for other subjects is not yet as thorough.
- Pupils are keen and confident when reading aloud in all lessons. Pupils often read accurately but, in keeping with their learning needs, do not always have a good understanding of what they read.
- Systematic teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) helps almost all pupils reach the nationally expected level in the phonic check.
- Pupil-premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding are used to give additional support for reading. These funds help eligible pupils make good progress, including applying their reading skills more generally in lessons. It is too early to judge the impact of the primary school sport funding on eligible pupils' achievement.
- Pupils speak very positively about having to work hard and do things without adults helping them all the time. They can explain what they have learned and how they approach tasks.
- Scrutiny of pupils' past work, observations of pupils learning in lessons by inspectors and by academy leaders, show over time that pupils make good progress in most lessons.
- Parents who expressed a view believe that their children achieve well, but have mixed views on how well academic achievements are communicated to them.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because, as a team, teachers and support staff are well prepared so that pupils learn well. Teachers and other adults manage behaviour sensitively so that learning is not disrupted.
- Occasionally, pupils learn less because they do not build on what they know at a fast enough rate. In such instances, the teacher has planned activities that are too easy, or too difficult, for some.

- Many pupils are taught in small groups. This approach is successfully helping those pupils who were taught in their previous schools though one to one teaching or had part time timetables.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the staff, the Deputy Principal and the occupational therapist has recently changed the layout of the room and organise activities differently. These changes are leading to some impressive improvements in children's learning.
- Access to teaching and learning outside the classroom for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is hampered by the limited covered area.
- The teaching of physical education, most of which takes place in the mainstream academy's gymnasium and is taught by a subject specialist from the special academy, is particularly strong.
- Teachers' marking, the use of personal targets and displays of work have improved as a result of recent training but do not yet provide all pupils with good quality information on how to improve academic and personal skills.
- An over-use of worksheets means that pupils do not record enough of their work for themselves.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good because staff work systematically and collaboratively to reduce pupils' anxieties. As a result, learning generally takes place in a calm, purposeful atmosphere.
- Pupils are given time and space to manage their own behaviour when things become difficult and are taught how to spot the early warning signs. This supports them well to return to learning quickly, and to think about their behaviour.
- Some of the pupil premium funding is used to support pupils' emotional and social development, such as mentoring for achievement and attendance. This helps those eligible pupils to be ready to learn and make up for lost learning.
- The complex behaviour of a few pupils means that they are taught for most of the time away from the class. There is a plan for each pupil to reintegrate with their class but these plans are not put into action quickly enough.
- The Deputy Principal has identified improvements needed in planning and tracking pupils' personal development, particularly their behaviour, and is revising the policy and plans.
- Parents and pupils say that swearing is sometimes a concern, but agreed that this is usually a problem for individuals and is not widespread.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe is good because pupils are effectively supervised by well-trained staff. Pupils are encouraged to think about the impact that their behaviour has on others and they are taught about potential dangers.
- Pupils know about internet safety and how to use equipment safely both in class and on the playground. They know that bullying of any kind is wrong.
- Pupils have a very mature sense of their own behaviour and that of others. As a result when individual pupils struggle to behave well, others do not join in the poor behaviour and feel safe

and confident to stay out of the way or seek support from staff.

- Attendance, currently at 97%, is higher than the national average for mainstream schools.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The Principal sets high expectations and has a very clear vision for the future of the academy.
- From a newly-formed group of staff who had not worked together before, the Principal has developed a strong team of dedicated, happy and confident professionals.
- The new Deputy Principal has made a good start in taking the lead for improving teaching and pupils' learning. Although too early to see the full impact, this is already making a difference to staff confidence and pupils' achievements.
- The Assistant Principal is sensibly concentrating on developing appropriate schemes of work and resources, particularly for literacy and mathematics, which will grow as the academy expands.
- Plans for teaching and learning are strong in their focus on age-appropriate content and resources across the full range of National Curriculum subjects. Plans for when pupils reach Key Stage 4 are still being developed.
- Pupils' access to learning is enhanced by the enthusiasm of staff to collaborate with other professionals, such as the occupational therapist, the speech and language therapist and advisers from the trust.
- Academy staff at all levels benefit from professional contact with other academies in the trust and from specialist advisers employed by the trust. These links are particularly valuable as the academy develops and currently support developments in special educational needs, literacy, numeracy and attendance.
- Parents are very appreciative of how staff work with them on the things that are important to them in supporting their children at home.
- Although well-trained and confident in managing pupils' behaviour, some staff would like more training to manage the complex behaviour of individual pupils.
- Staff and parents rightly point out that pupils have limited opportunities to practise their skills in a range of real-life situations, such as within the community.
- Strategic plans lack a sharp focus on what pupils, including groups of pupils, will achieve as a result of planned improvements. This makes it difficult to evaluate whether the actions make enough positive difference to pupils' achievements.
- The system for tracking pupils' achievements is relatively new and is being developed by leaders to suit the needs of their pupils. Targets for pupils are challenging, mostly based on expectations for mainstream pupils. However, the school's data tracking system has only recently been able to identify accurately and with confidence who needs additional support.
- Pupils' emotional, social and behavioural development is not tracked systematically enough for leaders and teachers to have a clear view about how well pupils develop personal skills.

- Detailed financial planning by the Principal and bursar put the academy in a good position to move ahead with long-term plans and improvements. These include resources for information and communication technology, teaching and learning plans for Key Stage 4 and the long-term maintenance of the site. The academy has already invested in high quality resources, such as sensory rooms and play equipment.
  
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The trust demands high performance and commitment from staff. It monitors the academy's performance frequently from a range of sources. Consequently the trust is well informed about the academy's work, including the use and impact of additional resources, such as the pupil premium funding. Arrangements to safeguard pupils meet requirements. Staff's performance is monitored frequently in collaboration with the Principal and performance is linked appropriately with pay.
  - The Principal, Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal welcome the considerable accountability that the trust requires. They benefit from the frequency of the professional challenge and the timeliness with which the trust can offer advice and support to staff at all levels. The advisory council helpfully adds an additional source of challenge and support from parents and professionals.
  - The trust provides generic policies for all of its academies. These are not tailored sufficiently well to give staff at this academy specific guidance to deliver what their particular pupils need, such as the policies for special educational needs, safeguarding pupils and behaviour management.



## 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> | 138271       |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Peterborough |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 425152       |

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

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| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Special  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy free school                              |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–18   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 57   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust                  |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Barry Day (Chief Executive Officer of the trust) |
| <b>Principal</b>                           | Sue Bailey                                       |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | Not previously inspected                         |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01733 821403                                     |
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