

Salford City Academy

Northfleet Road, Peel Green, Eccles, Manchester, M30 7PQ

Inspection dates 28–29 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses

- Students' achievement is inadequate. The proportion of students making or exceeding expected progress from their starting points is too low particularly in mathematics.
- The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSEs, at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is well below average and has declined in recent years.
- Not enough teaching is consistently good or better throughout the academy, including in the sixth form. Teachers do not always plan work and set activities that help students to make good or better progress.
- The quality of marking of students' work is too variable and on occasions does not help students to improve their work or learning.
- In some lessons, students do not pay attention and chat when the teacher is speaking.
- Senior leaders and the governing body do not always check well enough on the impact of additional support for groups of students, particularly those with weak literacy and mathematical skills.
- Subject leaders do not play a full enough part in improving the academy, especially in improving the quality of teaching and checking on students' progress across all subjects.
- The sixth form requires improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Students are well cared for through the academy's effective pastoral care systems.
- Students say that they feel safe in the academy. The very large majority of parents support this view.
- Students are generally polite and well mannered. Relationships between students and adults are good.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have a clear view of the success they want for the academy and what needs to be done to improve it further. The Executive Principal and other senior leaders have already taken decisive action that is leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and students' attainment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 lessons. Three lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also visited several classrooms with senior leaders to review students' work.
- Inspectors looked closely at school documents, including the academy's information on students' progress, behaviour and safeguarding information, the academy's analysis of how well it is doing, as well as its improvement plan.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, teachers and other staff including middle leaders, and two members of the academy's improvement board.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 responses from parents recorded in the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), together with the 76 responses to a parental survey carried out by the academy in October 2013. Inspectors also took account of the 65 responses to the staff questionnaire provided by Ofsted.

Inspection team

Alan Parkinson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gillian Salter-Smith	Additional Inspector
Tudor Griffiths	Additional Inspector
Peter McKay	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- Salford City Academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- A new Executive Principal was appointed in September 2013.
- A new school improvement board was appointed in September 2013 to take over the governance of the academy from the former governing body.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those from families in the armed services and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion of these supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The academy enters students for some GCSE examinations earlier than is usual.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy uses the local authority's Fairbridge Centre, Canterbury Centre and Oakwood Special School to provide alternative off-site provision for a very few students.
- Over the past year there have been a number of staffing changes, including at leadership level.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good across all subjects, to ensure students make the progress of which they are capable, by:
 - planning work that provides the right level of challenge for students and engages them fully in their learning
 - improving the quality of marking across all subjects giving students clear guidance on what they need to do to improve
 - providing more opportunities for students to develop their speaking skills to enable them to talk more effectively and confidently about their work, and to use standard English
 - making more effective use of teaching assistants to support teachers in the classroom and students' learning.
- Improve progress and raise attainment in mathematics by ensuring that students have a greater understanding of mathematical processes and can apply their skills more effectively.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - developing the role of subject leaders in improving the quality of teaching and raising students' achievement in their subjects so as to make a more effective contribution to the academy's performance
 - checking more rigorously that any additional support for groups of students accelerates their progress, particularly those supported by the pupil premium

- ensuring that the actions to improve the sixth form and post-16 student outcomes are clear and specific in the academy development plan.

An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium is recommended in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because too many students are not making good enough progress, particularly in mathematics, from their individual starting points.
- Most students enter the academy with attainment that is typically below and sometimes well below average. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics has declined over the last three years from 53% in 2011 down to 30% in 2013. Attainment is too low.
- In 2012, the proportion of students making at least the expected progress in English was similar to the national average but well below average in mathematics. In 2013, the proportions of students making at least expected progress in English and in mathematics were well below the national average. Too few students made more than expected progress.
- The decline in achievement, particularly in 2013, was because students' targets were too low. Systems to check on students' progress did not give an accurate picture of their performance and teaching was not strong enough. However, recent improvements in the quality of teaching, work in students' books and evidence in current academy assessment data show that the progress of students across a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics, is now improving rapidly. The current rate of progress in English is greater than that in mathematics; however, still too many students across the school are not making expected progress.
- In November 2013, the academy entered all Year 11 students early for the GCSE examinations in English and mathematics. Although no students achieved a GCSE pass at grade A* in either subject, the academy's own data, indicate that the progress and attainment of students is better than that for the 2013 cohort. All students will have the opportunity to retake the examinations to seek to achieve a higher grade.
- Almost half of the students have reading skills that are below those typically expected for their age when they enter the academy. The academy's accelerated reading programme has had a very positive impact, particularly in raising the reading age of a considerable number of students.
- Over recent years, the academy has not robustly checked the progress of different groups of students, such as the most able and those supported through the pupil premium. However, the academy's new system for checking progress is being used well to identify at an early stage those students who are at risk of falling behind in their learning and who need additional support, particularly to improve their literacy and mathematical skills.
- Lesson observations and an analysis of students' work show that the most able students are making more rapid progress and are being challenged well by teachers to reach the higher levels of attainment.
- In 2013, students known to be eligible for free school meals attained a grade that was approximately two-thirds of a GCSE grade lower than all other students in English, and approximately one-half of a GCSE grade lower in mathematics. Data for the current Year 11 students show that the difference in the progress of eligible students compared to that of their peers is less than that seen nationally in both English and mathematics.
- The academy's own progress data show that the progress of different groups of students, including the most able, those eligible for the Year 7 catch-up funding and pupil premium supported students is similar and sometimes better than that of their peers. Additional funding is now being used well to provide one-to-one tuition and small group work, in particular, to develop students' reading and numeracy skills.
- The few students who speak English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds made similar progress and sometimes better progress than their classmates because of the effective support they receive.
- Current data show improvement and there are no significant variations between the progress made by disabled students and those with special educational needs and all other groups of students.
- The academy makes very good use of alternative provisions for a very few students to provide

appropriate courses that engage their interest well and ensure they benefit from a more tailored provision. This supports the academy's aim of providing equal opportunities for learning and success for all students; however, as students make inadequate achievement they do not yet have equality of opportunity with their peers nationally.

The overall achievement of students in the sixth form requires improvement. While students following BTEC courses in the sixth form attain above average standards, attainment at both AS and A level declined slightly in recent years and remains broadly average. The proportion of student leavers moving on to the next stage of their education, training or employment is above average. This shows that students are prepared well for their future lives.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving rapidly, overall it requires improvement because not enough is consistently good or better, including in the sixth form.
- In some lessons teachers do not always plan activities that enable all students to learn well, whatever their ability. As a result, students do not always find the work interesting and engaging or the work is either too hard for some or too easy for others. Some students then lose concentration and their progress slows.
- Across the school, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for students to develop their speaking skills so they can talk about their learning and share their ideas. As a result, some students lack confidence in their work and in use of standard English. Teaching assistants are not always used effectively in lessons to support teachers and help ensure students learn well.
- Although teachers mark students' work regularly, the marking does not always help them to improve. Good marking provides clear written comments that inform students what they need to do to improve and teachers ensure that advice is followed up. However, this good practice is not consistently applied across all areas. As a result, opportunities to take learning further are missed.
- In the increasing number of lessons where students learn well, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and encourage students to develop their understanding. In such lessons, learning moves on and students focus on their work and make good progress.
- In a Year 12 physical education lesson, students were planning individual training programmes and made very good progress. Students were fully engaged in their work and spoke confidently, explaining why they had selected a particular training exercise.
- The setting of targets for students is now more robust to ensure they are set more aspirational targets. This is enabling all students, including the most able, to make faster progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- In a few lessons students are not eager to learn. Some are slow to settle to lessons or do not always pay attention because the work is not always challenging and sufficiently interesting. As a result, their attitude to learning deteriorates and they do not learn well enough.
- All students are aware of the sanctions used to tackle poor behaviour and say that they have helped. Students and staff say that behaviour has improved considerably since last September both in and out of the classroom. This view is confirmed by the academy's data which shows a fall in the number of sanctions issued, including exclusions.
- The vast majority of students are polite and well mannered. The relationships among students and between students and adults are good.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say they feel very safe because they are well cared for by teachers and other adults. They have a clear understanding of different forms of bullying and report that bullying is rare. Students say that should any instances of bullying occur, they are quickly resolved.

- A very large majority of parents agree that their children are well cared for and feel safe. Students have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example, by learning how to use the internet safely and about the risks from alcohol and drug abuse.
- The academy is inclusive and provides good pastoral support and care to all students, particularly those who are disabled, those who have special educational needs, or those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Opportunities are provided for students to take on responsibilities, such as prefects supporting staff during break and lunchtimes or as student mentors to help other students improve their reading skills. Students also help others by raising money for charities, such as Children in Need and Comic Relief. The whole academy takes part in the 'mile run' in support of Sport Relief.
- Students value the opportunity to contribute to further improvements in the academy. Through the work of the student council the canteen staff now provide food that takes account of different dietary requirements including those to meet various cultural needs.
- Over recent years, the academy has taken effective action to improve punctuality and to reduce persistent absence. As a result, attendance has continued to improve and is currently average, with fewer students arriving late than used to be the case.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, over recent years, the quality of teaching and rates of achievement have not been good enough. Systems in place to check on teaching and progress were not robust and rigorous.
- The new Executive Principal together with the senior leaders and the members of the school improvement board know the academy very well. They have accurately identified its strengths and areas for improvement and demonstrate a passion and commitment to bring about improvements to both teaching and achievement. However, the actions for improving the sixth form and student outcomes are not clearly identified in the development plan.
- The work of all subject leaders is not fully developed to enable them to make a more effective contribution to the academy's overall performance by checking and improving the provision, teaching and students' progress in their subject areas.
- The Executive Principal is providing a very strong steer to improve the academy and is creating a positive atmosphere and culture throughout the academy. He has had a significant impact on others, convincing them of the need to raise standards and expectations, a view that is supported by staff, governors and most students.
- Actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and raise attainment are successfully accelerating progress, particularly in English, from a very low baseline. Improvements in the quality of teaching are also helping to improve students' attitudes and behaviour.
- Systems for checking the quality of teaching and students' progress are more rigorous and provide teachers with accurate feedback on their performance. Information gathered is being used well to provide a continuous programme of staff training and to advise the governing body about teachers' pay awards.
- The curriculum offers students courses and opportunities that provides breadth and balance. It is under constant review to ensure that it prepares students for the next stage of their education, training or employment. The wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities provide students with opportunities and experiences to develop their personal and academic skills further and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The academy has received appropriate and increasingly effective support and advice from its sponsors United Learning, and other external advisers on ways to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The school improvement board has an accurate understanding of the strengths of the academy and what needs to be done to improve it further. Its members are well informed about the academy's performance and the quality of teaching and are able to offer very

effective support and challenge to the academy's senior leaders. They demonstrate a firm commitment to ensuring that the quality of teaching improves further. They understand how senior leaders are tackling any areas of underperformance. They have a good understanding of the academy's finances, including the allocation of pupil premium funding. However, in recent years this spending has not been rigorously monitored to check on its impact on students' learning, particularly in English and mathematics, to ensure that it is being spent effectively. The school improvement board now ensures that performance management procedures are used to set appropriate and challenging targets for staff and it has implemented a clearly defined link between the quality of work that staff do and the arrangements for pay progression. The board ensures that safeguarding procedures and policies meet statutory 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	135071
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	431799

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

Type of school	Academy
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	613
Of which , number on roll in sixth form	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Woods
Headteacher	David Yates
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2011
Telephone number	0161 789 5359
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