

# William Hulme's Grammar School

Spring Bridge Road, Manchester, Lancashire, M16 8PR

**Inspection dates** 23–24 April 2014

|                                |                      |             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good        | 2        |
|                                | 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.

- The progress that students make in the secondary phase of the academy is currently, and has been for at least three years, outstanding, particularly in English and in mathematics.
- Achievement in other phases is improving.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. The academy's ethos promotes these aspects of personal development exceptionally well.
- The sixth form is good. When students leave this academy, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The majority of students receive good teaching and some is outstanding.
- All pupils and students receive the highest quality of care and support.
- The majority of pupils and students present themselves very well, are articulate, polite and courteous and take their studies very seriously. These pupils and students attend well and are punctual.
- Leaders and managers have ensured the academy's complex transformation from an independent school to a good co-educational academy for three to 18-year-olds, very successfully.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that the quality of teaching and achievement is improving including for pupils currently in the primary phase and students in the sixth form.
- Leaders of highly successful subjects support the improvement of other schools within the United Learning group.
- The curriculum strongly supports high attainment in the secondary phase.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The progress that pupils make in the primary phase and that students make in the sixth form is not as strong as in the secondary phase.
- A small proportion of students do not behave as well as they ought to. Attendance rates, although improving, are broadly average.
- Some staff are not consistently held to account for their responsibilities because there are variations in the quality of leadership and management.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a sample of teaching. It included 31 parts of lessons, taught by 29 different teachers. It included all phases of the academy including the Early Years Foundation Stage and the sixth form.
- Inspectors worked with senior staff while observing teaching and learning and reviewing work previously completed by pupils and students.
- Inspectors spoke to many pupils and students during breaks, lunchtimes, and lessons. More formal meetings with pupils and students were also held.
- Inspectors observed activities taking place during assembly, form and registration time.
- Meetings were held with members of the local governing body, senior leaders and other staff. A discussion was held with two representatives of the academy's sponsor, United Learning.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the academy's self review and improvement plans, reports, internal and external data about pupils' and students' attainment and progress, behaviour and attendance records and students' work. They scrutinised safeguarding procedures and records.
- During the inspection, 44 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and parental surveys conducted by the academy were taken into account. Inspectors reviewed 38 responses to the inspection questionnaire completed by staff and the results of an earlier staff consultation conducted by the academy.

## Inspection team

Neil MacKenzie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Pruchniewicz

Additional Inspector

Mary Lanovy-Taylor

Additional Inspector

Clare Daniel

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- William Hulme's Grammar School is an 'all through' academy of average size and opened in 2007.
- The academy has an Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stages 1 and 2 (primary phase), Key Stages 3 and 4 (secondary phase) and a sixth form.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium provides additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children looked after by the local authority.)
- A large proportion of students are from a wide variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest group have Pakistani heritage and represent about two fifths of the school population.
- Almost a half of the students speak English as an additional language, which is well-above average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is well below that found nationally.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- No students receive part of their education at other institutions.
- Early entry to examinations is not currently used.
- William Hulme's Grammar School is part of the United Learning group of schools and academies.
- Leaders of some subjects support the improvement of other schools within the United Learning group.
- The academy is the lead United Learning school in the north for the School Direct programme. A government sponsored programme to train teachers, new to the profession.

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

- Improve the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils in the primary phase and of students in the sixth form so that it is similar to the outstanding progress made at Key Stage 4.
- Ensure all pupils and students behave as well as they should by ensuring all staff apply the academy's behaviour policy rigidly.
- Monitor all aspects of the school's work more rigorously and more frequently, holding staff to account for the progress, behaviour and personal development of pupils and students.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the nursery with development which is generally below that expected of this age group. Over recent years, the rates of development children have made throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage have been variable. On leaving this stage, children's development is broadly similar to the proportion nationally that reach a good level of development. The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement because teachers do not know accurately enough how well individual children are developing. This means they cannot provide activities that will move children on quickly. Although resources for children's development have improved since the last inspection, they are still not good enough to support rapid development. In addition, there are physical constraints which limit the opportunities for children to work seamlessly between inside and outside.
- Pupils' performance in the Key Stage 1 national phonics check has been below average and the attainment of pupils in Key Stage 1 has been broadly average. Previously, pupils in Key Stage 2 made progress that was broadly similar to national rates of progress. Writing, however, was weaker. There have been some differences in the progress of some groups of pupils, for example, the performance of girls was weak last year.
- Currently however, rates of progress are accelerating across the primary phase and the differences in the progress of particular groups are narrowing quickly. From their starting points, pupils are making good progress including in writing. The proportion of Year 4 pupils on track to make expected progress in mathematics is below that in other year groups. Achievement overall across the primary phase is now good.
- The academy has a reputation for excellent achievement throughout the secondary phase. This has been and continues to be fully justified. The outstanding progress students make produces excellent GCSE results, particularly in English and in mathematics. The progress of other subjects in Key Stage 4 is almost equally as strong.
- Through Key Stage 3, students progress well with very high proportions making at least expected progress. Progress in art, drama, French, geography and music, although good, is not as strong as it is in other subjects.
- Currently, academy analysis shows all of the most able students are on track to attain five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics. These students progress quickly over the secondary phase in all subjects. The achievement of the most able students is well above the national average for this group.
- Academy records show that almost three quarters of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals are on track to attain five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, 80% of those who are not eligible are on track to attain the same standard. This represents a narrowing of the attainment gap over time and the gap in the progress this group makes is also narrowing.
- Due to the excellent support students are given, other groups, including disabled students, those with special educational needs and students who speak English as an additional language, make similar rates of progress to others.
- The additional funding the academy receives to help Year 7 students improve their literacy and numeracy skills is very well spent. These students say their confidence improves rapidly and they can now more easily keep up with their learning in other subjects. School data confirms their achievement has improved, including an increase in their reading ages and an improvement in their progress in mathematics. Literacy and numeracy skills generally, including reading and mathematics, are well developed across the academy.
- Over the past three years, the achievement of students in the sixth form has been broadly average. The academy has recognised this and has taken steps to improve the progress students make in the sixth form. Currently, students are learning better and the academy's analysis points to a slight improvement this year with a more significant improvement the following year.

- The sixth form is good because, despite the relatively modest progress students have made in the past, it is improving, and high numbers have gone on to the best universities to study academic courses. This is because students are very well prepared for their next steps. Students have high aspirations and their personal qualities are very well developed by the academy.
- The success of the academy's caring and inclusive approach can be seen through many examples of students succeeding despite their very challenging personal circumstances, some of whom were refugees.
- The academy is promoting equality of opportunity as there is little variation in the performance of different groups of students, particularly in the secondary phase and in the sixth form.

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

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and most activities have good purpose: pupils and students know what they have to learn and why. Typically, a very good range of interesting activities and topics are provided for pupils and students. Good, specific support is sharply focused on those pupils and students who need additional help with their learning. When pupils and students are not learning as well as usual, activities are adapted quickly, ensuring a good pace of learning is always maintained.
- Highly successful teaching of literacy and numeracy across the academy is particularly evident in the very high standards that students ultimately achieve in English and in mathematics. These skills, together with good information and communication technology (ICT) skills support good achievement across the curriculum.
- Over time, students in Key Stage 4 receive the greatest proportion of outstanding teaching. There is a small proportion of teaching in Key Stage 3 and occasionally in the primary phase that requires improvement.
- Both teachers and students use ICT well and this enhances teaching and learning.
- The most able students are well catered for, particularly in the secondary phase. Students are motivated through interesting and stimulating topics. Adults have very high expectations of the students. Where pupils and students do really well, particularly the most able, they think deeply about ideas and concepts. Students are encouraged to give full responses to questions with good explanations.
- Pupils and students trust the academy and their teachers to do the best they can for them. Students are confident that if they do not understand, time will be spent explaining and supporting them. Students also say any additional sessions to help those falling behind are very effective.
- Occasionally, when students' interests are not captured, low-level disruption becomes a distraction for the teacher and for other pupils and students. Although the academy has a policy on how to manage such incidents, some teachers are reluctant to follow this guidance and so do not effectively challenge the inappropriate behaviour.
- Guidance from recent training for teachers on how to make marking more useful for pupils and students, and in improving questioning, has been adopted well by some staff, but not all.
- The large number of pupils and students who speak English as an additional language, disabled students and those with special educational needs all receive very good support. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the development of these pupils and students because they are well trained and are passionate about enabling their students to improve.

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

- The behaviour of students is good. The majority aspire to achieve well. Pupils and students take pride in their work. They are respectful of other pupils, students and adults and have high expectations of how others should behave. They have a high moral code and will speak out if they feel there is an injustice or someone is not being treated as well as they ought to be.

- Almost all pupils and students present themselves well, being articulate and confident when talking to adults. They wear their uniform with pride. They take pride in their school too. There is no graffiti or litter. Movement around the school is calm and safe.
- Mobile phones are not a distraction to learning because all students accept the reasons behind the academy's strict and effective code of use.
- Temporary exclusion is used very rarely and permanent exclusion not at all. Attendance has improved and is now broadly average.
- The behaviour of a small number of dominant boys in the primary phase and at Key Stage 3 is not well managed by some teachers. Their low-level disruption by, for example, chatting and tapping pencils, can disrupt the learning of others. A few older students seek to draw attention to themselves by being deliberately late to lessons, which irritates the majority who are keen to start learning. Generally, too many students need to be directed by staff to move more quickly to lessons. Some work is poorly presented and inaccurate and not checked by the teacher.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The school meets statutory requirements and has excellent systems for child protection and support. The bonds between pupils, students and adults are strong and the pupils and students know they can get help if they ever need it.
- Pupils and students are taught how to be safe and are fully aware of the dangers they may face in their communities or while using the internet.
- Bullying is very rare, and pupils and students are often the first to intervene to support and ensure incidents are dealt with effectively.

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

- This academy has undergone a complex series of transformations over recent times. The process has been extremely well managed by both the current Principal and the local governing body.
- The school's ethos and culture of success is clearly valued by the communities around south Manchester.
- The achievement of students in Key Stage 4 has been consistently outstanding for many years because leaders at all levels, and teachers, know how to help students reach their full potential. They have ensured that pupils and students receive a fully rounded education. This includes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is very strong. Care and support are exemplary. There is a momentum across the secondary phase which most students get caught up in, and this helps accelerate them to achieve highly successful results and personal development.
- Pupils and students say there is 'positive pressure' to succeed and say this is a good thing. They also say the extensive range of sport and other extra-curricular activities is a welcome distraction to their academic studies. They feel the balance is just right. This wider curriculum contributes significantly to students' personal and cultural development.
- All levels of the academy's leadership and management, particularly leaders of different phases, have been less effective in improving achievement in the sixth form and across the primary phase including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is as a result of there having been too little evaluation of the effectiveness of these stages being based on pupils' and students' achievement. Although improving, further improvements are needed to ensure outstanding progress.
- Overall, the curriculum is good and engages pupils and students to learn. In the secondary phase and in the sixth form, the curriculum is academic and meets the needs of the students well.
- Senior leaders analyse the performance of staff and provide a good programme for developing teachers' skills. Recently, amongst other things, there has been a focus on improving questioning and the assessment of pupils' and students' work. The application of these developments is, however, not followed up well enough. Consequently, although some teachers

deepen pupils' and students' understanding by asking good questions and providing good advice on how to improve others do not.

- Some staff are not consistently and rigorously held to account for their responsibilities. This leads to many aspects of the academy's work functioning very well, but a few that do not.
- Additional sports funding has improved the quality of the teaching of physical education across the primary phase and pupils are now well taught by specialist staff. All pupils learn how to swim and the range of additional activities available to the pupils has been extended. There are strong links with local sports clubs and other groups promoting sporting excellence.
- The academy works well with its sponsor, United Learning. In addition to providing the academy with cost-effective administrative expertise, the sponsor provides external monitoring of the quality of the academy's work including the performance of the Principal. Recently, it has also brokered external support for key areas of the academy's development. By releasing key staff from their highly successful mathematics and English departments, the academy makes a significant contribution to the improvement of other schools across the academy chain.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The academy's local governing body is highly effective because the group consists of experienced professionals with a wide range of valuable skills and a passion for the academy to provide the very best.
  - Working with the sponsor, they hold the Principal to account for academy performance. They are well informed and have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and students' progress.
  - The governors have a clear understanding on how effectively additional funding to support pupils and students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is spent. They are able to describe how funds have been used and the subsequent improvements to their attendance, behaviour and progress.
  - The performance of staff is well managed by the governors, the Principal and by the academy chain. Staff will progress through the pay structure when they satisfy a rewards committee that specific criteria, which includes pupils' and students' academic success, have been achieved. The academy takes decisive action to address staff underperformance.
  - They ensure financial probity and that safeguarding procedures comply with legislation.

## 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> | 135296     |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Manchester |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 444366     |

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>                        | Community                     |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                    | 3–18                          |
| <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>    | 1,005                         |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b> | 181                           |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                  | The governing body            |
| <b>Chair</b>                                  | David Marsden                 |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                            | Peter Mulholland              |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>     | 20 October 2009               |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                       | 0161 2262054                  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                             | 0161 2325544                  |
| <b>Email address</b>                          | Principal.pa@whgs-academy.org |

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