

King Edward VI Academy

West End, Spilsby, PE23 5EW

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Students make good progress. The proportion attaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, places the academy in the top 40% of all schools in the country.
- Students from different groups, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs and those supported by additional funding, make good progress. Their needs are quickly understood and high quality support is provided for them.
- Teaching is good in most subjects. Teachers know students well and usually plan activities which interest and challenge them, encouraging them to do their best.
- The academy provides excellent opportunities to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Links through the academy trust broaden students' experiences of the arts, sport and culture, developing them as reflective, thoughtful individuals.
- Students' behaviour is good because clear rules and expectations are set and followed by the vast majority of students. Their awareness of how to keep themselves safe is good.
- The Principal's good leadership is focusing all staff on raising achievement throughout the academy. This is raising students' aspirations and ambitions.
- Senior leaders have led improvements well and hold all staff to account for their performance and that of the students in their care.
- The governing body and academy sponsor provide good support and challenge for senior leaders. They maintain a close check on the work of the academy.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not show consistently high expectations for what students, particularly the most able, can achieve.
- Although there are signs of improvements, students do not yet achieve as well in all subjects as they do in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons, including five seen jointly with academy leaders. Inspectors also observed support sessions for students who need extra help with their learning.
- Inspectors looked at activities during tutor time and listened to students read in class.
- Inspectors spoke informally with students during the inspection, gathering their views and experiences of life in the academy.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, the Chief Executive Officer of the academy sponsor and the executive principal in the role of the academy's improvement adviser. Inspectors met with subject leaders and staff responsible for checking attendance and behaviour and co-ordinating special educational needs.
- Not enough parents responded to the online Parent View survey during the inspection for results to be published.
- The lead inspector analysed the 26 staff questionnaires completed during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a number of documents, including information on students' current progress, planning documents, checks carried out by leaders on the academy's effectiveness, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Aune Turkson-Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Colin Lower	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Yates	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is much smaller than most secondary schools. It opened in September 2012 and is sponsored by the David Ross Education Trust.
- There is a growing sixth form based on the same site. The majority of students have come from King Edward VI academy but are officially registered as students from one of the other academies within the trust. The sixth form was, therefore, not included in this inspection.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding provided for students who are looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above average.
- The majority of students are White British. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language, mostly from White European backgrounds, is well below average.
- The percentage of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, mostly specific and moderate learning difficulties, and the percentages supported by school action, school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs, are all above average.
- A total of 12 students in Years 10 and 11 attend part-time courses and work placements in different locations. Skegness College offers students a hair and beauty course and Willow Farm provides animal care courses. Year 11 students have followed building and game keeping courses. Four Year 10 students have placements organised in nursery and primary schools.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement across all subjects, by ensuring that:
 - staff consistently show the highest expectations for the standards of work students can produce
 - lesson activities are set at a suitable level of difficulty, so that all groups of students are challenged and pushed to achieve their very best
 - teachers' marking and feedback comments to students are always clear and informative and students regularly correct or improve their work as a result.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the academy with skills in reading, writing and mathematics which are well below those found nationally. In its first full year as an academy, most of these learning gaps have been successfully filled. Good teaching and tailored support for students are increasingly enabling them to make good progress. The proportion of students currently on track to attain five GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics is edging above the national average. This shows their good progress.
- In English, the proportions of students making expected progress and attaining an A* to C grade were around the national average in 2013. In mathematics the proportions exceeded the national average for expected progress and students entered early for GCSE examinations were able to improve their grades, reaching average standards. In both subjects, the proportions of students exceeding expected progress were well below national figures. However, current data show that higher proportions of students in both English and mathematics have reached and exceeded expected levels than seen nationally in 2013.
- Detailed checks of students' progress in all years are ensuring that the majority receive the support and challenge they need to achieve well. However, across the academy, there are slight variations between subjects where past, teaching has been less strong. Current data shows that the accelerated rate of improvement seen last year is being maintained this year and most students, including those capable of attaining higher levels and A* and A grades by the time they leave the academy, are on track to achieve their targets.
- Individual and highly personalised support ensures that disabled students and those who have special educational needs receive the help they need to achieve well. The small proportion of students who speak English as an additional language receive good support when it is needed and soon catch up, making good progress in line with other students.
- Less-able students in Year 7 benefit from additional funding to boost their literacy and numeracy skills. Summer school gets the students off to an early start, and small group support led by a specialist literacy teacher enables most of them to catch up quickly. Inspection evidence shows rapid improvements in students' reading ages and an enthusiasm for the library, renamed by students 'the Spine' as it forms the 'backbone' of all that learning is about.
- Compared with the previous year, the attainment gaps between Year 11 students eligible for the pupil premium and their peers in the academy are reducing. Students make similar progress in English and progress in mathematics has improved. This is because the academy has invested in additional support for students, including one-to-one and small group support and the creation of English, mathematics and science tutor groups, led by subject specialists.
- The attendance and progress of the students who study on other sites is closely monitored to ensure that they remain in full-time education and make the progress expected of them.

The quality of teaching is good

- Leaders have rightly placed a strong focus on improving teaching and learning, and this is one of the main reasons why the quality of teaching is now more consistently good, with some outstanding. The most effective practice in teaching is more readily being shared and teachers are more willing to learn from one another. Mutual respect is at the heart of the positive

relationships which pervade the academy.

- Most teachers show high expectations and insist on good behaviour. They use their good subject knowledge to plan learning that reinforces students' reading, writing and mathematical understanding, and stretches the most able students.
- Relationships between teachers, support staff and students are good and the academy has created a positive learning climate where the majority of students have confidence in their own abilities and high aspirations to succeed. They enjoy learning and show their positive enthusiasm. In a Year 7 English lesson, several boys studying *Romeo and Juliet* were amazed that they were 'actually reading Shakespeare' and could understand the sentiments behind several of the quotes.
- Students are increasingly encouraged to find things out for themselves and to express their views in class. They often work with partners or in groups and learn how to work productively with minimal input from the teacher. In a Year 8 religious education lesson, students were highly articulate and passionate in expressing their views of racism during the 1936 Olympics and using a 'hot seat' activity to question Jesse Owens about Hitler's actions.
- Less-able students in Year 7 are taught together in small groups to aid their transition into the academy and there is good literacy support for Year 8 students to boost their reading and writing skills. Good teaching and support from teaching assistants to improve reading builds students' confidence and self-esteem, and prepare them well for learning later in the academy.
- Homework set has a clear purpose. Students are encouraged to use online learning software, which the academy carefully checks, to see which students are regular users and how much time is being spent. Students understand that homework is a regular feature and extension of their studies which helps them to improve their knowledge and skills.
- Senior leaders acknowledge that not enough teaching is outstanding. When learning is most effective, teachers' high expectations are passed onto students and they quickly tackle work which stretches them, pushes them to think more deeply and reach a higher standard with interest and enthusiasm. This is not consistent. There are occasions when the activities provided are too easy for some students, particularly the most able, or too hard for others.
- Students' books show that marking and teachers' comments and feedback do not always help students to improve their work, and teachers do not always check carefully to make sure students regularly correct or improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Students have developed positive attitudes to learning and the great majority act responsibly in managing their own behaviour in the academy. School councillors have good profiles across the academy and students' views are well represented. This contributes to the purposeful and positive atmosphere of the academy.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in the academy and outside, and many students are knowledgeable about e-safety and understand the potential dangers of misusing the internet. This is because the academy has raised their awareness through assemblies, lessons and trips.
- Throughout the inspection, students were polite and respectful. They behaved well in and out of

lessons. Students understand the expectations staff have of them and this helps to keep the students on track and feel well supported by adults. They say that the procedures used to promote good behaviour are fair and realise that they have led to improvements since the academy opened.

- Attendance has remained above average since opening and exclusions have reduced. The academy has been active in promoting attendance and continues to tackle persistent absence through its close working partnerships with families who struggle in this area.
- With little exception, students express great pride in being a part of the academy and present themselves smartly in the uniform. The strong house system adds to their feeling of 'being a part of a community' and sense of 'belonging'. Students treat each other with mutual respect and are tolerant of each other's differences. There are few racist incidents and discrimination is not tolerated.
- Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively when it occurs. Students could easily name staff to whom they could go for help if they needed it.
- The presence of sixth formers in the school has had a highly positive impact on raising the aspirations of younger students. Many see themselves following a similar path. Advice and guidance are offered early, in Year 10, encouraging students to start thinking about their own next steps.
- On the very small number of occasions where teaching is less engaging, students occasionally lose their focus and become restless, but generally respond to teachers' reminders about their behaviour.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal's good leadership has ensured a smooth start for the academy, against a backdrop of locating a new sixth form on the school site. She leads by example and has facilitated a positive, orderly learning climate within the academy. She teaches and is popular with students because she is out and about, approachable and listens to their views.
- Standards have risen due to the continued commitment and actions of senior leaders to secure good teaching and learning. Regular training and monitoring of lessons are making staff fully accountable for the quality of their teaching and its impact on students' achievement. Accurate self-evaluation ensures that leaders know where the academy's strengths and areas for improvement lie.
- Systematic, thorough monitoring of students' progress underpins the academy's plans for raising achievement. Staff have access to useful data to identify underachievement and target support for students who need it. As a result, standards are rising quickly. Middle leaders are more actively involved in monitoring in their subject areas, and support for teachers in their departments is readily accessible within the academy and through the trust. This is adding capacity to secure further improvement.
- Changes made to the range of courses offered have broadened students' choices and ensured that they are guided towards the ones that are the most suitable for them. This ensures the 'best fit' for individual students, providing a blend of academic and work-related subjects. The proportion of students continuing their studies from the end of Year 11 into sixth form, college and training placements this year is increasing.

- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strengthened through the exceptional and extensive selection of additional activities offered since becoming a part of the trust. Aspirations have risen through contact with high profile, high achieving sports personalities, politicians and successful business people. Students' exposure to expressive and creative arts, such as a forthcoming visit to the ballet, has increased their understanding of different cultures.
- Every opportunity is taken to forge strong relationships with parents and carers. Pastoral leaders communicate with parents to resolve issues arising and also provide a point of contact for parents wishing to express their concerns. Parents are provided with regular reports on their child's progress throughout the academic year. Parents' evenings are well attended and provide an opportunity to gauge their views. They are welcomed into the academy to celebrate students' achievements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are highly committed to continuing to improve the academy. They work closely with leaders and the academy trust to ensure that raising the quality of teaching and learning remains at the heart of their work. The trust provides good, additional capacity and resources to make improvements quickly. There is a clear vision for the future development of the academy.
- Governors have a good understanding of information on students' progress, and undertake regular training to refresh their knowledge and skills. They use the most recent data to make comparisons with other schools, locally and nationally, and actively challenge school leaders where dips occur. They meet with key staff, and make visits to check directly on important areas of the school's work.
- Governors ensure that financial resources are efficiently managed, know how the pupil premium and additional Year 7 funding is being spent to raise reading levels through the creation of small groups led by a specialist literacy teacher, and monitor the impact of these initiatives on achievement.
- Governors see that targets to improve the performance of all staff are reviewed carefully and that staff pay is linked to how well students are doing. They are highly motivated and increasingly visible in the school and ensure that safeguarding meets 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	138783
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	440076

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	384
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pam Badley
Principal	Margaret Reeve
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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