

University Academy Keighley

Green Head Road, Utley, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD20 6EB

Inspection dates

20–21 May 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not enough students make good progress in English and mathematics. Progress in other subjects also varies.
- The activities that teachers plan for students are not always challenging and teachers do not always check students' understanding rigorously enough to support those who are finding work too difficult or too easy.
- The quality of marking is variable in showing students what they need to do to improve.
- The approach to developing students' skills in writing and speaking also lacks consistency. Students do not have enough opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English and questioning does not always require students to give extended, spoken answers.
- The sixth form requires improvement. The quality of teaching is not consistently good and, consequently, achievement varies between subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Strong senior leadership and management are driving the academy purposefully forward. As a result, the quality of teaching and students' achievement is improving securely, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- The sixth form is also led and managed well. Consequently, the quality of teaching, students' attitudes and their achievement are improving securely.
- The academy is making very effective use of information about individual students' progress to identify and tackle any underachievement at an early stage.
- Students feel safe and most behave well around the academy and in lessons.
- Attendance is above average.
- This is an academy that values each student as an individual and does all it can to make sure that all students have equality of opportunity.
- The governing body is knowledgeable and supportive. It knows what the academy does well and what it needs to do to improve further. It provides good challenge to hold leaders and managers to account.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 33 lessons taught by 31 teachers. Three of the observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors looked closely at samples of students' written work across a range of subjects and year groups. They also observed behaviour around the academy.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, four groups of students, three members of the governing body and a representative of the academy sponsor.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including: self-evaluation and development plan summaries; data relating to students' attainment and progress; information on attendance; documents and records about behaviour and safeguarding; records of the monitoring of teaching and learning and of performance management; and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors analysed 66 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also analysed eight questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Stephen Wall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Clive Hurren	Additional Inspector
Anthony Billings	Additional Inspector
Tudor Griffiths	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- University Academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well-above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students from ethnic minority backgrounds is well-above average. The majority of these students are of Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well-above average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- About 20 students attend part-time vocational courses at Leeds City College, Keighley Campus, Bradford College and the James Project.
- The proportion of students who join and/or leave the academy at other than normal times is higher than average.
- The academy enters some most able students early for GCSE in English.
- Leadership has seen several significant changes in recent years. An executive Principal works with the academy on a part-time basis. The Principal has been in post since February 2013 after a period of secondment to the academy; a new vice Principal and assistant vice Principal have been in post since September 2013. The sixth form has also had new leadership since September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Iron out the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form to raise achievement to at least good by ensuring that:
 - activities are always challenging enough for different groups of students in all key stages, including the sixth form
 - there are regular checks on students' progress and understanding during lessons so that any misunderstandings are dealt with promptly and do not hold up learning
 - marking always shows students what they need to do to improve their work and that they act on the advice given.
- Improve students' skills in speaking and writing by:
 - making sure that questioning is used consistently well to make students think deeply and give extended and reasoned answers
 - ensuring that students have more opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, although the proportion is rising, not enough students are yet making consistently good progress in several subjects, including English and mathematics.
- While the majority of students have made the progress expected of them in English and mathematics, the proportion doing better than this has not been close enough to the national figures in recent years. As a result, in 2013, the proportion of students attaining 5 A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, was significantly below the national average.
- Students join the academy with attainment that is generally well-below average. Current academy data confirmed by inspection evidence from observing learning, discussions with students and scrutiny of their work, confirm that the proportion of students making more than the progress expected of them is growing securely, particularly in English and mathematics. Consequently, attainment is improving rapidly and is set to rise further in the coming years. However, students' skills in spoken communication and in writing lag behind somewhat because teaching is not consistent in paying these aspects close enough attention.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to support lower-attaining students in Year 7 with developing their reading, writing and mathematics. Academy data show that students make rapid progress in reading, with many improving their reading ages significantly. Students' writing and mathematical skills also receive an effective boost. Close attention to developing students' writing skills is also laying solid foundations for success as they move up through the academy.
- In the sixth form, achievement is rising because students' progress is now checked rigorously and the quality of teaching and learning is improving.
- The gap in attainment between students known to be eligible for free school meals and their classmates varies significantly from year to year. In 2013, the gap was large with those students in Year 11 known to be eligible for free school meals attaining approximately one grade lower in English and mathematics than other students. Information provided by the academy and verified by inspection evidence shows that the gap is narrowing rapidly and securely because systems to check on students' progress are more rigorous and support is provided at an early stage for students who are not doing as well as they should.
- The proportion of most able students attaining the highest grades at GCSE is rising, but is not yet as great as it should be. The academy is aware that teaching needs to challenge these students with greater consistency to enable a greater proportion to succeed at this level.
- Students who are disabled or with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language generally achieve well because of the strong and effective support that they receive.
- Most students who join the academy at other than normal times make the progress expected of them. The proportion doing better than this is growing, because academy leaders have extended provision to meet students' needs and are tracking their progress more effectively.
- The academy checks meticulously on the attendance, behaviour, safety and progress of students who attend vocational courses at other establishments. Academy data show that most achieve well, attend regularly and are safe.
- The academy enters some most able students early for GCSE in English. Results are used to decide whether students are best served by continuing to try to improve their grade or whether to study for GCSE in English literature. Inspection evidence does not show that the early entry has anything but a positive impact on students' achievement.
- The academy's strong and successful commitment to providing equality of opportunity is succeeding in closing achievement gaps at a fast rate and is leading to better attainment for all groups.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Although the quality of teaching is improving, it requires improvement because not enough is yet consistently good or outstanding and does not enable a large enough proportion of students to make good progress. Teaching activities do not challenge the most able consistently well. While reading and mathematics are taught increasingly effectively, writing is developed less well, because in subjects other than English students do not have opportunities to write at length.
- Activities set for students are not always at the right level of challenge. Some students find the activities too easy and some too hard. This acts as a brake on accelerating progress at a faster pace, especially for the most able.
- In the sixth form, the quality of teaching is also improving and this is resulting in better achievement.
- Relationships between teachers and the students in their classes are generally strong. Teachers are starting to use information about students' progress and abilities with a much sharper focus. This is enabling them to identify students who are not doing as well as they should and to tackle the root causes. However, the full impact of this has yet to be felt on achievement.
- The consistency with which teaching develops students' writing and speaking skills varies too much. In some subjects, for example, too many worksheets encourage students to write only simple, short answers. In some classes, questioning is not skilful enough to encourage students to think deeply and give extended spoken answers.
- Where the level of challenge is high and questioning is used skilfully, students show what they can do. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson on *The Tempest*, students rose eagerly to the challenging activities that they were set. Skilful questioning took students on a step-by-step path to understanding and encouraged them to give detailed and extended answers. Enjoyment in learning and a sense of achievement were obvious; progress was outstanding as a result.
- Teaching assistants support students who are disabled or with special educational needs effectively. As a result, most make good progress in their learning and understanding.
- Most teachers mark students' written work regularly. However, the comments that they make on students' work vary in how well they show students what to do to improve their work. There are few examples in books of students responding to, and acting on, the comments that teachers make.

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

- The behaviour of students is good. It has improved significantly since the previous inspection because better teaching is resulting in more students enjoying their learning. Teachers are more confident and consistent in how they deal with students who misbehave.
- Students confirm the improvements that are taking place. 'It's much calmer now in lessons and outside because we know what's expected of us', is a typical student view. However, on a few occasions when activities fail to grasp their interest, students can become distracted and chat among themselves about topics that have nothing to do with the content of the lesson.
- Attendance levels have also improved and are now above average. This shows not only students' greater enjoyment but their greater desire to learn. 'If you're not here you can't learn', was one student's succinct way of putting it.
- Students are punctual in the mornings and to lessons. They bring the right equipment with them so that no time is wasted getting them ready for learning. They wear their uniforms correctly and with pride.
- Students are very proud of their academy building and take exceptionally good care of it. Graffiti and litter are nowhere to be seen.
- Students are polite to each other, to the adults working with them and to visitors.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students say that bullying of any kind is rare and that adults are quick to tackle it on the few

occasions that it happens.

- Students have a good understanding of situations that might potentially be unsafe and how to avoid or deal with them. This includes good knowledge of the potential dangers of using social networking websites, for example.
- The responses to Parent View were unanimous in agreeing that behaviour and safety in the academy are good.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal is providing the academy with strong and purposeful leadership. She is ably supported by other senior leaders, including the executive Principal. As a result, the academy is improving rapidly and securely. However, because the initiatives that leaders have put in place are at a relatively early stage, their full impact has yet to be felt.
- Good leadership and management of the sixth form are bringing about a rapid rise in attainment and are raising students' aspirations. The number of students applying for academic courses at leading universities is growing year on year.
- Senior leaders know what the academy does well and where it could do better. Planning for future success is clear and sharp.
- Weaknesses in teaching are being tackled rigorously. The quality of teaching is checked regularly and accurately. The outcomes are used to target training where it is needed most. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving securely, and is increasingly good and outstanding. However, some teaching is proving more resistant to change and still requires improvement.
- Leaders and managers have tightened procedures for checking on students' progress towards increasingly challenging targets. Targets for staff have been raised and staff are held closely accountable for achieving them. The link with achieving demanding targets and decisions about salary progression is clear.
- Subject leaders are becoming much more closely involved in checking on the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility and for holding staff to account for driving up standards, although some are more advanced in this respect than others.
- The curriculum generally meets students' needs. However, opportunities for students to develop their speaking and writing skills hold up faster progress in these areas. There is a growing range of activities in sports and the arts that take place outside normal academy hours. An increase in trips out and visitors to the academy are expanding students' horizons and preparing them increasingly well for life in a multicultural society. This range of popular activities adds significantly to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Relationships with parents have been strengthened. The level of parental support for the academy is strong. This is seen in the sharp increase in the number of parents choosing the academy as the first choice for their children for the coming academic year.
- The academy sponsors provide strong and effective support and challenge for senior leaders in their drive for improvement.
- Policies and procedures for safeguarding students are fully and actively in place.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is knowledgeable and supportive. It provides strong levels of questioning and challenge that are helping to make the academy more effective. It has strong roots in the local community, meaning that it not only knows the needs of parents and students but is able to spread the word effectively about the improvements that are taking place and to restore community belief in the academy. Governors take regular part in training activities that give them a firm understanding of data to show them how well the academy is doing in comparison to other academies and schools, both locally and nationally. Governors receive and question regular reports from senior leaders about the quality of teaching across the academy. They are adept at using and interpreting information about the academy to gauge the quality of teaching and where it needs to improve further. They understand fully the link between the

appraisal of staff performance and the links with salary progression based on meeting specific targets. The governing body has a firm grasp on finances, including the allocation and impact of pupil premium funding. Governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met.

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	136198
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	442316

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-Maintained
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	644
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nadira Mirza
Headteacher	Linda Wallsgrove
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2012
Telephone number	01535 210333
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