

# Thomas Ferens Academy

540 Hall Road, Hull, HU6 9BP

## Inspection dates

17–18 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Students make inadequate progress in English and mathematics. Students, including those with disabilities and special educational needs, particularly in Key Stage 3, significantly underachieve.
- Students supported by the pupil premium also make inadequate progress; they are often absent and frequently excluded from the academy. This is because the use of this additional government funding to support these students is inadequate.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate. Teachers expect too little of students. This leads to students making slow progress and presenting poor quality work.
- Attendance overall is low and shows little or no sign of improvement. Too many students are regularly absent.
- Students' behaviour and safety are inadequate. The number of students excluded from the academy is above average. Students do not always behave safely. Some students are not prepared to go to certain areas of the academy because of others who are smoking there.
- Over time, leaders, managers and governors have not taken effective action to improve the inadequate behaviour and quality of teaching.
- The leaderships' plans for improvement are very weak. Some subject leaders have not identified clearly key priorities for improvement.
- Leaders and managers are too positive about the academy's performance. This limits the capacity of the academy to rapidly drive forward the necessary improvements.
- Governors have not held the academy sufficiently to account. They are not always provided with clear responses to their questions and so cannot be confident that the academy is improving.

### The school has the following strengths

- There is some good marking of students' work in English and this helps them to improve their work.
- Governors have started to ask more challenging questions to check on the academy's progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons taught by 24 teachers. Eight observations were undertaken jointly with leaders from the academy.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of students about their learning in lessons and their safety in the academy. Inspectors also listened to some students reading.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and six other governors. Governors included representatives of the academy’s sponsors. Meetings were held with academy staff, including middle and senior leaders.
- Inspectors also looked at the academy’s review of its own performance, its development plan, school policies and the minutes of the governors’ meetings. Inspectors also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work in lessons and analysed samples of students’ books.
- Inspectors analysed the 12 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). There were 89 questionnaires completed by staff which were analysed by inspectors.

## Inspection team

James McGrath, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pauline Pitman

Additional Inspector

Sally Lane

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- The academy opened in September 2012. The four sponsor organisations are the University of Hull, Wyke Sixth Form College, Wilberforce College and Hull City Council.
- The academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of girls in the academy is much smaller than average.
- The number of students in each year group varies considerably. The number of students in each year group has been increasing since the academy opened in 2012.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free academy meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most students are of White British heritage. There are few students whose first language is believed not to be English but the number of these students is increasing.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is well above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The alternative providers used by the academy are Aspire Pupil Referral Unit, Ashwell Pupil Referral Unit, Bishop Burton College, Hull College, Hull Fire and Rescue Service, Hull City Football Club, Local Works, North Carr Cuisine, St Michael's Youth Service.
- The school does not use early entry to GCSE examinations.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Swiftly improve the quality of all teaching so that it is at least consistently good and enables all groups of students to make rapid improvements in achievement, especially in English and mathematics, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - have high expectations of what students can achieve to drive up standards for all groups of students so that none underachieves
  - measure the progress and understanding of students regularly and accurately to ascertain when they are ready to move on to their next stage of learning
  - mark students' books regularly in order to provide them with the advice they need to improve their work and learning
  - set high standards for the presentation and organisation of students' work
  - give greater opportunities for students to write at length and, in particular, encourage boys to do so
  - provide regular and effective homework to drive up achievement
  - use the support of teaching assistants more effectively to rapidly improve standards for those students supported by the pupil premium and those with special educational needs.

- Swiftly improve students' behaviour and safety, including their attendance, by developing effective practices to:
  - reduce the number of students who are regularly absent from the academy, particularly those supported by the pupil premium and those with disabilities or special educational needs
  - eradicate bullying so students stay safe and feel safe
  - reduce overall levels of student exclusion from the academy to at least average or better
  - reduce persistent low-level disruption and instances of misbehaviour so that learning improves
  - eradicate incidents of some students' disregard for the safety of others.
  
- Rapidly improve the impact of leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, by ensuring they:
  - eradicate inadequate teaching and improve that which requires improvement
  - develop effective plans and targets for improvement that have a clear measurable focus on improving achievement, the quality of teaching and students' behaviour and safety
  - have a sharper focus on closing gaps in achievement between different groups of students
  - raise attainment for those students with special educational needs and ensure the additional government funding is spent effectively to raise the achievement of those students eligible for further support
  - ensure that information is analysed effectively to determine the impact of pupil premium spending in raising achievement
  - ensure that all subject leaders are fully accountable for and closely check on learning within their subjects, including scrutinising the quality of students' work, in order to accelerate the progress for all students
  - take the full range of information available into account, particularly the progress students make over time, when judging the overall quality of teaching
  - provide governors with clear responses to their questions at all times to enable them to hold the academy to account for its performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for the academy.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Students enter and leave the academy with standards that are well below average; consequently, they are making inadequate progress. This is because the work set for them lacks challenge and this holds back their learning.
- Students' overall progress throughout Key Stage 3 in both mathematics and English is also inadequate. Progress is exceptionally slow for all students in Years 8 and 9 especially, boys, those with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium. Only about three out of ten of students in these groups in Years 8 and 9 are making the progress expected of them. This is due to inadequate teaching over the time the academy has been open.
- Students supported by the pupil premium make much less progress than other students in Key Stage 3 and their attainment continues to be as low as that of the other students. The work being done to support these students is ineffective in closing their attainment gaps in English and mathematics.
- Those with disabilities or special educational needs make much less progress than other students in English and mathematics. The quality of teaching they receive does not match their different needs well enough and as a result, their progress is exceptionally slow. The school's information indicates that progress is exceptionally weak in Year 10 and in Year 7 for these students in comparison to others. Consequently, there is much to do to ensure the academy's commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- An analysis of students' books showed that they are making slow progress and that work is not securely assessed accurately and consistently.
- As with other students, the most able students are not challenged well enough as teachers' expectations of them are too low.
- In 2013, those leaving in Year 11 had spent one year in the academy. From standards that were well below average on entry to the predecessor school they made slow progress. Only 20% of them gained five or more A\* to C grades including English and mathematics. Their overall progress was well below average. The academy's forecast for these students was much more positive than the results they actually achieved.
- In 2013, at the end of Year 11, those students known to be eligible for free school meals were two thirds of a GCSE grade behind others in English and a half a grade behind in mathematics. An exceptionally low proportion of these students, only 14%, attained five or more A\* to C grades including English and mathematics. Overall standards of attainment in 2013 were well below average. The attainment of students on courses equivalent to GCSE, studied through the school's alternative provision, was insufficient to further improve this overall attainment.
- The academy forecasts for 2014 GCSE results indicate improvements in attainment. Should the school's forecasts be accurate the progress made in mathematics and English still remains considerably below that expected nationally.
- The use of Year 7 catch-up funding is not showing rapid improvements in literacy and numeracy for those students entering the academy with below average standards in English and mathematics. The academy's focus on supporting reading is helping students to begin to enjoy reading. They particularly enjoyed working with a visiting author.

### The quality of teaching

### is inadequate

- As a result of weak teaching over time, students are underachieving, particularly in mathematics and English. Too little progress is made by students supported by the pupil premium and those with disabilities and special educational needs due to the weak teaching they receive.
- Analysis of students' work shows that teaching has too little impact on learning over time. Expectations of the quality of presentation of students' work are too low and the presentation of work is highly variable both within and between departments. Students are not challenged

sufficiently well to make enough progress from their low starting points. Boys are not encouraged sufficiently to take opportunities to write at length to improve their skills in English whereas girls do so without too much prompting. Very little homework was seen by inspectors in books and some students said that very little homework was set.

- The progress students are making is not assessed accurately. Praise for mundane work that is not of sufficiently high quality is given too readily. Activities are not adjusted well enough to help students to move on and enable them to make better progress.
- Marking of students' work is very inconsistent. There is some good marking in English with helpful comments that students are beginning to act upon to improve their work. However, there is much work that is frequently not marked and too many examples of where marking does not provide useful advice. When marking is weak students do not respond to improve their work and consequently many are making slow progress.
- Literacy skills are not reinforced sufficiently well to ensure that students are making effective progress. There are too few opportunities for students to write at length. Students are given opportunities to read out loud to support the development of their reading.
- Teaching assistants are not managed effectively to ensure that all students are making good progress. Their work is not checked regularly, and teachers are unclear about their role.
- Students work well when interesting tasks or presentations capture their imagination. When they are interested students respond well to greater challenge and they are keen to learn. Good relationships and mutual respect characterise these lessons with students keen to give their opinions and do their best.

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

- The behaviour of students is inadequate. Attendance is low and there is too much misbehaviour.
- School records indicate incidents of dangerous behaviour towards other students in the classroom as well as elsewhere in the school. During the inspection students were found throwing chairs in a crowded area and an assault on a student was witnessed.
- The attendance of those students in the academy since it was established shows too little signs of improvement. Attendance rates are in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. The attendance of students supported by the pupil premium and particularly those with disabilities or special educational needs is lower than others. There are too many students who are regularly absent from school.
- When teaching engages the students they can behave well and follow the instructions of their teachers. However, there is too much low-level disruption by some students and this interrupts other students' learning. There are occasions when some students are disinterested, lethargic, rude and make inappropriate remarks in lessons. Not all students show respect to their teachers.
- Those students attending are generally punctual to the academy. They wear their uniform with pride and have a smart appearance.
- Since the academy opened there have been a large number of fixed-term exclusions. The use of the 'NET', an inclusion room, is supporting a reduction in exclusions. However, there is misbehaviour in the 'NET' that is not always managed effectively. Permanent exclusions are above the national average.
- Students are aware of the various forms of bullying. Students say they suffer cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying. Students are not confident that bullying is dealt with appropriately. School information indicates there are a large number of recorded incidents of bullying and racism; it also indicates, however, that incidents of bullying and racism have declined over the past year.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is inadequate. For example, some students do not feel safe enough to go to some areas of the school due to smokers being there.
- Some staff indicated their concerns that behaviour is not good in their responses to the staff questionnaire.

**The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Leadership at all levels, including governance, has been ineffective in ensuring that the quality of teaching is good enough to prevent many students from underachieving. There has not been enough attention paid to closing the gaps in achievement between different groups of students. Leaders have not secured rapid improvements in attendance rates since the academy opened, nor have they prevented the behaviour and safety of students from being inadequate.
- Leaders' self-evaluation of the academy's performance is overgenerous and therefore does not give the school a clear idea of the urgency needed to improve achievement, behaviour and safety and the quality of teaching and learning. This limits considerably the capacity for the academy to improve.
- Plans for improvement are exceptionally weak. Measures to judge the success of planned actions do not focus sufficiently on whether actions will improve students' achievement and the quality of teaching, thus contributing to the leaders' unclear understanding of how well the school is doing. Leaders of subject areas do not ensure consistently high expectations in their department. They do not make sufficient checks on the quality of students' work, including making sure that work is marked to a consistently high quality. Leaders of subjects have only just started to analyse the areas for development in a systematic manner. They have not yet established key priorities for improvement nor strategically planned for improvement.
- Leaders and managers are not judging the quality of teaching over time by taking a complete range of information into account, particularly the progress students are making over time. They are inconsistent in their judgement of the quality of teaching. Systems for managing the performance of teachers are in place. However, the targets set for improvement are not sufficiently well refined to hold staff to account and to drive up the quality of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- The pupil premium funding has not been used effectively to secure the improvements needed in students' achievement, attendance and behaviour and especially for those students eligible to receive additional support. Not enough has been done to measure the impact of this funding.
- The school's curriculum is ineffective in raising achievement. It does not enable students to make sufficient progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills to be well prepared for education, employment or training. The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is weak as the school has yet to eradicate instances of racist behaviour.
- The academy sponsors have not challenged leadership strongly enough to ensure that students are making the progress they should.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Over time, governors have not been sufficiently diligent in challenging the Principal about key weaknesses such as the quality of teaching, achievement and behaviour. They have failed to tackle underperformance effectively, particularly for those students supported by the pupil premium funding and those with disabilities or special educational needs. Governors are now much more demanding and have started to ask more challenging questions, although indications are they are not always given clear and detailed responses to their enquiries. They are now receiving more detailed information about the school and students' progress and are in a better position to hold leaders and managers to account for their actions. Governors are well aware of the link between performance management of teachers and their pay progression. They are checking the finances of the school carefully and have a financial plan. While the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements, governors have not ensured that all students feel safe in all parts of the school.



## 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>	138246
<b>Local authority</b>	Kingston upon Hull City of
<b>Inspection number</b>	425694

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>	Sponsor led academy
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	575
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Heseltine
<b>Principal</b>	Juliet Strang
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01482 349600
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<b>Email address</b>	admin@thomasferens.org

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