

Wreake Valley Academy

Parkstone Road, Syston, Leicester, LE7 1LY

Inspection dates 1–2 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The Principal who is well supported by senior leaders, focuses relentlessly on improvement and raising expectations. As a result the academy has continued to improve since the previous inspection.
- Students make good progress over time in both English and mathematics. Progress is improving in a wide range of subjects. Achievement gaps between different groups of students including disadvantaged students are narrowing quickly.
- Teaching is almost always good and in some instances outstanding, including in the sixth form. Students' work hard and show good attitudes to their learning.
- Students conduct themselves well between lessons and show respect for each other and their teachers. They take pride in their uniform and the school grounds.
- Attendance is improving and is now close to the national average.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The academy is an inclusive and nurturing environment for all students.
- Leaders and managers have high expectations for themselves and the students. Staff are held to account for the achievement of students and receive effective training and support in order to make ongoing improvements to their teaching.
- Governors are passionate and rigorous in ensuring the academy continues to improve and offer strong and well informed challenge to senior leaders.
- The quality of provision and the achievement of students in the sixth form are consistently good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally teachers do not plan learning activities which enable the more able students, to reach the highest standards of attainment.
- Leaders have not yet fully implemented systems to monitor students' progress so that they can put in place additional learning support when needed.
- Homework is not consistently planned and used well enough to challenge students and make sure they make the best progress possible.
- Not enough students attain the highest possible grades in the sixth form.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 47 lessons in 14 different subject areas. Five of these observations were carried out jointly with members of the academy’s leadership team.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of students, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body as a representative of the academy trust, the academy’s improvement partner and a representative from the Local Authority.
- Inspectors also spoke with students at breaks and lunch times.
- Inspectors took account of the 53 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Responses to questionnaires completed by 89 staff were also analysed and considered.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including locally published assessment data and the academy’s own data, self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding policies, behaviour policies and records, and documents relating to setting targets for teachers to improve their work.
- Inspectors listened to students read and evaluated the quality of their work in lessons and books. Some of the evaluation of the work in students’ books was carried out jointly with the deputy principal.
- Inspectors also visited an assembly and observed students’ behaviour in lessons and around the academy.

Inspection team

Matthew Spoor, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jan Rowney	Additional Inspector
Beverley Strange	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector
Helen Booth	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- The academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school converted to become an academy on 1 April 2012. When its predecessor school Wreake Valley Community College, was last inspected by Ofsted in 2009, it was judged to be good.
- The great majority of students are of White British heritage and few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding for looked-after children and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A very few students are taught jointly in alternative provision away from the academy site at Brooksby Melton College in Melton Mowbray, at the Maplewell Hall Special School, Loughborough and Gaz's Auto in Leicester.
- The academy has commissioned support from Oadby Beauchamp School during the previous twelve months.
- The standards of achievement in the academy exceed the floor standards expected by the Government.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the strengths of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring:
 - teachers make the best use of assessment information and resources to plan activities that allow more able students to make the best possible progress.
- Raise achievement further by ensuring:
 - Homework is well structured and challenging and delivered consistently, so that all groups of students reach their fullest potential
- Increase the impact of leadership at all levels by:
 - Strengthening systems for identifying and planning for, extra support that students may need, in order to extend their learning and reach beyond expected levels of progress

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are good

- The academy has made rapid progress to address the issues raised in the previous inspection and as a result standards have risen. The Principal models professionalism and has created a culture of teamwork and a shared passion within the staff for both the academy and the community which it serves. This along with a relentless focus on improving standards of teaching and leadership has ensured that teachers are held to account for the achievement of students.
- The academy's self evaluation is accurate and the leaders in the academy are clear about what the academy needs to do to improve further. The academy has set itself challenging targets for improvement and has robust plans in place to bring this about.
- Senior leaders and leaders in charge of subjects use a range of data about how well students are achieving to both inform parents of the progress their children are making and to identify if students need to catch up. However, this needs to be developed further so that the small numbers of students supported by school action plus and with statements of special needs, as well as the most able are provided with extra help as quickly and efficiently as possible so that they make even faster progress.
- As a result of the academy's implementation of new approaches to assessment including the 'Wreake Way' which focuses on student feedback to marking, and provides areas for students to improve and correct, students make good progress in their learning.
- Leaders in charge of subjects work well together to promote the best practice and consistency in teaching quality across the curriculum and now have a clear view of the performance of their departments. They are able to take responsibility for holding their colleagues to account for students' achievement.
- The management of teachers' performance and their professional development are robust and used to support and challenge teachers whose work has not led to students making the best progress that they could. As a result of the wide range of effective training opportunities for staff to attend, teaching has improved significantly
- The range of subjects provided for students is broad and balanced. There is an appropriate mix of both academic and work-related courses on offer. A high percentage of students progress to post-16 studies.
- Through a variety of subjects, visitors and assemblies, students receive highly effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The academy promotes healthy lifestyles by offering a range of choices in the canteen and well-attended sporting clubs. A wide range of activities is available beyond the classroom, including a variety of sports, arts and drama. For example, the well attended gardening club, not only raises environmental awareness but helps the small number of students who have found it difficult to engage with academy life to improve their attendance.
- Partnerships with other schools have been used effectively to promote the best outcomes for students. The academy plays an active part in promoting and preparing its students for life in modern Britain through opportunities for students to participate in activities such as the student council and volunteer work experience in the community.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well across academy provision. Careers guidance is well developed. Students visit colleges and universities and this raises their aspirations of what they are able to achieve in the future.
- The academy has highly effective systems for safeguarding and maintaining the welfare of students and meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding, including for those accessing off-site provision.

■ The governance of the school:

- is informed by a very clear and accurate evaluation of the academy’s strengths and the areas in which it needs to develop further, through regular visits to the academy
- regularly holds the Principal and other leaders in the academy to account for the academy’s standards of performance, including how well assessment is being used to drive improvements in teaching and learning.
- uses data to evaluate the performance of the academy and works closely with the Principal to develop plans for improvement. Members of the governing body are rigorous in using performance data and their knowledge of the academy to ensure that teachers are rewarded for good performance and to challenge underperformance.
- ensures the efficient and effective management of financial resources and provides challenge and support to the academy to ensure the most effective deployment of staff and use of external funding including the pupil premium.
- is transparent and open in its communication about its role in the academy, both with the academy and parents and participates in a range of activities in the community to promote and inform parents about its work.
- makes sure that the academy fulfils its statutory duties in relation to safeguarding and the performance management of staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. During breaks and at lunchtime they act very responsibly and look after the academy grounds and buildings for example by making sure they do not drop litter. In the dining hall and library they behave well together and the atmosphere has a buzz of well ordered camaraderie.
- Students, parents and staff all agree that behaviour is good. Students conduct themselves very well and they demonstrate respect for each other and their teachers in the way they work together in lessons. Students and staff share a strong sense of belonging to a community. They take pride in their uniform and arrive promptly each day and to lessons which helps them to make good progress.
- The number of students temporarily excluded from the school has fallen rapidly since it became an academy. In part, this is because of the introduction of new systems that emphasise use of exclusion as a last resort. It is also the result of a relentless focus by the academy’s leaders on supporting students’ individual needs and using rewards to encourage students to join activities outside of the classroom and become more engaged with the academy as a whole. There have been no permanent exclusions.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because students do not consistently display a love of learning and a thirst for knowledge. Attendance is lower than the national average although absence overall is reducing and no particular group of students is absent more than any other.

Safety

- The academy’s work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students understand risks. They know how to keep themselves safe both in the academy and in the wider world including online.
- Students know and follow the academy rules. They find teachers very approachable and say it is always easy to talk to them if they have a problem.
- Inspectors questioned students about bullying. Students unanimously said that bullying is rare and any aggressive behaviour is dealt with immediately.
- Students have a good understanding that racism or any form of discrimination is not tolerated, and say it does not happen.
- The academy ensures that students who attend courses at other institutions are safe and behave well.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding which means that students make good progress over time. This is because teachers have good knowledge of their subjects, model professional attitudes and behaviour and have high expectations of the students. Coupled with this they are able to accurately judge what students need to do to improve and plan their lessons to meet the students' needs.
- Teachers use questioning well to check students' understanding and guide their learning. For example, in a Year 7 History lesson, students developed their abilities to analyse historical sources of evidence through discussion with each other and questioning by the teacher. This helped the students to concentrate and to build up their knowledge and deepen their understanding of the topic.
- Teachers use of data which show students' attainment and progress over time to measure their current rates of progress and to identify students in their classes who are falling behind. However activities are not always planned well enough to set them challenging targets to aim for and which stretch the thinking and effort of the more able.
- Students who are taught part time at provision away from the academy achieve well because teaching is well organised and activities are well matched to their needs.
- The teaching of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is often good. Teachers involve teaching assistants closely in lesson planning. As a result, the attainment of these students has improved over time and most now make expected progress.
- Teachers mark students' work regularly and use a range of strategies to encourage students to evaluate their own work and respond to the teacher's comments.
- Teachers plan learning effectively but, just occasionally, they do not demand enough of the students so that they do not make as much progress as they could, particularly the more able.
- Homework is not used consistently well enough to either prepare students for their lessons or to further develop their knowledge and understanding. Planning to challenge the more able through homework activities is not systematically planned for across all subjects.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- Students arrive into the academy with levels of attainment in line with national averages. As a result of teaching which is well organised and tailored to meet the needs of students the proportion of Year 11 students attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, and the proportion attaining GCSE A*-C grades in both English and Mathematics has risen over the last three years and is now above the national average.
- The progress students make in the academy in English and mathematics is in line with the progress both expected and more than expected of other students nationally. In the majority of other subjects including science, students make progress at or above that seen nationally.
- Work in students' books indicates that students are making good progress over time in the majority of subjects. Students are aware of their target grades and they receive regular information about their current achievement, which is linked to GCSE predictions.
- The academy has a well thought out strategy for spending of the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged students. Through a range of activities and extra provision, particularly the appointment of two specialists to deliver high quality literacy and mathematics teaching, the academy is providing highly effective support for these students. The gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged

students and other students nationally have closed rapidly, so that these students are now making good progress. These students now leave in Year 11 less than a quarter of a grade behind in English and half a grade in behind mathematics compared to their peers within the academy and less than one grade when compared to all students nationally in English and mathematics.

- The additional funding to help those Year 7 pupils who start school behind their classmates is used very effectively and as a result these students make good progress.
- As a result of a range of strategies and teaching assistants who provide high levels of support, disabled students and those with special educational needs are now making faster progress than in previous years and now make broadly expected progress and achieve in line with their peers.
- Students in alternative provision at the local colleges and settings make good progress in their vocational courses.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress although too few of the most able attain the highest grades possible.
- The progress of the more able students is improving quickly in all subjects and more students are now attaining the highest grades at GCSE. However teaching does not always ensure that students are making better progress than might be expected in relation to other students nationally.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Students enjoy their time in the sixth form. Their conduct around the academy is exemplary and sets a clear example for other student to follow. They develop good skills which enable them to learn by themselves and cooperatively in groups. They engage very purposefully in learning activities and are determined to do well.
- Students receive good feedback on their work and this enables them to make progress in most subjects studied which is above the national average.
- Disadvantaged, disabled and students who have special educational needs make progress in line with expectations and in line with their peers, due to the careful planning by teachers to meet their needs and deliver activities which engage and challenge them.
- Students are excellent role models for younger students and they take a lead role in supporting the academy and local community activities such as library assistants, mentoring younger students and primary school transition.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Students receive high quality careers education, information and guidance. Personalised support and good teaching help them learn. In 2014 all students entered higher education, training or employment.
- The sixth form is not yet outstanding because not enough students capable of achieving the highest grades do so.

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	137983
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	447727

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1157
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Drew
Principal	Antony Pinnock
Date of previous school inspection	17 April 2013
Telephone number	0116 2641080
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