

Weston Favell Academy

Booth Lane South, Northampton, NN3 3EZ

Inspection dates

5–6 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Although students currently make expected progress, achievement requires improvement because the proportion of students who achieve five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is not high enough.
- Teaching is not always as good as it could be because work is not always pitched at the right level for some students. As a result, the most-able students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, in particular, do not always make the progress that they are capable of making.
- Students' attendance is improving but it is below average.
- Teachers' marking and feedback do not consistently help students to improve their work.
- Some teachers do not regularly insist that students, particularly boys, present their work neatly and accurately.
- Sometimes, teachers' questioning does not require students to think deeply.
- Some students do not always behave as well as they could in Key Stage 3. Sometimes, teachers do not apply the academy's behaviour policy in a consistent way.
- Subject leadership requires improvement because some subject leaders do not check effectively that actions to improve teaching, achievement and behaviour are being implemented.

The school has the following strengths

- Students make good progress in the sixth form because teaching is good. The sixth form curriculum is good because it helps students to develop academically, personally and socially.
- Although inconsistent, progress in the main academy is improving. As a result, in 2014, students achieved more A* to C grades than in previous years. Year 11 students are making good progress in mathematics and English this year.
- Disadvantaged students are catching up with their classmates in many subjects, including in English and mathematics.
- The academy makes sure that students feel safe. Bullying is rare in the academy.
- The trustees have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 36 lessons, 16 of which were jointly observed with senior leaders as well as the Executive Principal and the Education Director of the trust. The inspection team made several short visits to other lessons, some with senior leaders, to check on the progress and behaviour of different groups of students. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of students' work in their books.
- Meetings were held with seven groups of students from all year groups. Other meetings were held with members of the trust board and with senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects.
- Inspectors analysed the 44 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the work of the academy and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the academy's improvement plan and data on students' progress.

Inspection team

Richard Sutton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Wendy Davies	Additional Inspector
John Taylor	Additional Inspector
Beverley Mabey	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The academy is sponsored by the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust and works in partnership with other academies in the trust. The school converted to an academy on 1 September 2012.
- Almost one student in three is from minority ethnic heritages. This is above the national average.
- One in five students speak English as an additional language which is above the national average.
- Almost one student in 10 is supported through school action. This is close to the national average. One student in 20 is supported through school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs. This is below the national average. No students currently have education, health or care plans.
- The pupil premium, which is additional funding given to schools for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, provides support for just over one third of students. This is above average.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 study vocational courses for part of the week at Rushmere Academy and Northampton College. Others study with two training providers called On Track and Complementary Education.
- The academy has an 'advisory council' which consists of a small group of staff and parents who provide support and challenge to the academy. This group does not have any legal responsibilities. These are held by the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust Board.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement in the main academy (Years 7 to 11) so that more students gain A*-C GCSE qualifications including English and mathematics by making sure that:
 - work is always at the right level for all students, particularly the most-able students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs
 - more students attend school regularly
 - marking always gives students guidance on how they can improve their work and teachers regularly check that their advice has been acted upon
 - teachers use effective questions which always require students to think deeply
 - teachers always insist on students, particularly boys, presenting their work neatly and accurately.
- Improve the impact that leaders have on accelerating improvements in teaching, achievement and behaviour in the main academy by ensuring that:
 - all staff always insist on the highest standards of behaviour and effort, particularly in Key Stage 3
 - staff apply the academy's behaviour policy consistently
 - all subject leaders regularly check that actions for improvement are being implemented.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders have systems in place to check teaching, achievement and behaviour. However, the way in which information from these checks is used by some subject leaders is not always effective. This means that some students do not always have the same opportunities as others to achieve their full potential.
- Leaders have not made sure that all staff consistently apply the academy's behaviour policy in all lessons. This means that sometimes misbehaviour in Key Stage 3 is not dealt with as consistently as it should be.
- Students are grouped according to ability or in mixed-ability groups, depending on the subject and year group. However, the most-able students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs do not always have their needs fully met, even when they are grouped appropriately. This is because teaching is not always well matched to these students' skills and abilities.
- Leaders have ensured that the vast majority of students and staff show a good level of respect for each other, there is no hint of discrimination anywhere in the academy. The academy also makes sure that all students have equal opportunities to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Students in all year groups, including the sixth form, are given good independent advice and guidance regarding their future careers. Older students benefit from support to help them to make informed decisions about examination subject choices, and are well informed about the opportunities available to them in further and higher education, employment and training. Virtually all students go on to further education, training or employment.
- Leaders regularly check teaching, achievement and behaviour at the local college, nearby academy and training providers, where some students attend for part of the week to study vocational courses.
- The curriculum is adequately matched to students' interests and abilities. It is made more exciting through, for example, opportunities for students to take part in workshops delivered by external groups which help them to learn about other cultures and develop their understanding of citizenship and life in modern Britain. These activities, as well as the well-planned assembly programme, help students to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. The academy is reviewing both its curriculum and assessment arrangements in the light of recent changes to the National Curriculum.
- Information about students' progress is shared with parents at appropriate times throughout the year. The majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire indicated that staff respond effectively to their concerns and useful partnership with them has been created.
- The academy uses the additional pupil premium funding effectively, and leaders monitor the impact that this has on the achievement of eligible students closely. Consequently, students supported by the pupil premium are catching up with their peers in most year groups.
- The sponsor provides a good level of support to the academy. For example, it provides regular opportunities for staff to work with colleagues from other academies in the trust so that good practice can be shared.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The board of trustees understands the academy's strengths and weaknesses. However, Trustees have not ensured that achievement, teaching and behaviour are good enough in Years 7 to 10.
 - Members know how the academy's results compare with other schools and are skilled in the interpretation of students' achievement data; consequently, they provide a good level of support and challenge to the academy.
 - The board of trustees carries out its statutory duties fully. For example, it ensures that the academy fulfils statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding: appropriate checks are in place for visitors to

the academy, and all staff have been checked as required and are trained to keep students safe and free from harm.

- The trustees monitor the curriculum, and they have made sure that students are taught to respect people of different cultures and faiths and are prepared to take their place in modern Britain.
- The trustees know how the additional pupil premium and Year 7 'catch-up' funding is used and they check this regularly.
- Trustees know about the quality of teaching and the management of staff performance. They are appropriately involved in making decisions about whether teachers should receive pay rises in relation to meeting their targets. They have ensured there are appropriate procedures in place to tackle underperformance of staff, should these be required.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. In Key Stage 3, lessons are sometimes disrupted because some students do not behave well. Students told inspectors that not all staff use the academy's behaviour policy in the same way which is an important reason why behaviour is not always good. In addition, behaviour in lessons which are taught by supply teachers is often not good. A significant minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire do not think that behaviour is good.
- When teaching is not as good as it could be, some students do not always show good attitudes to learning and they lose concentration and, consequently, make slower progress. Some boys, in particular, do not always show pride in their work, which is too often untidy and poorly presented.
- Most students are polite and well mannered and they dress smartly. Students arrive to school and lessons on time and they show a good level of respect towards each other as well as the school environment; the site is tidy and free from litter.
- The number of students who are excluded from school is reducing. Although exclusions are a little above average, there are fewer than when the academy opened.
- Attendance is below average but it has improved from being in the lowest ten percent of all secondary schools. The attendance of most groups of students is improving and the number of students who regularly miss school is also reducing.
- The small group of students who study vocational courses at other institutions behave well and this makes a positive contribution to their achievement.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The academy has made sure that students have a good understanding of safety matters, including how to keep safe when working online.
- The academy has good safeguarding systems in place to check the safety of students who attend other institutions for part of the week. Their attendance is rigorously monitored to check that these students are where they should be.
- Bullying is rare at the academy and, as a result, students feel safe. When it does occur, students are confident that staff deal with matters quickly and effectively. Students are taught about the different forms of bullying, including homophobic bullying, and they are appropriately equipped to manage such situations should they occur.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in the main academy is not consistently good which is the main reason why students' achievement is too variable. The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is adequate and

so students, including those who speak English as an additional language make expected progress in key areas of learning.

- Sometimes work is too easy for the most-able students which means that these students are not always able to achieve their full potential. Staff do not always explain effectively to students how they can reach higher levels of skill.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs do not always benefit from good teaching because work is sometimes too hard or too easy. In addition, the support that some of these students receive from teaching assistants is too variable because teaching assistants do not always use good questions which help students to fully understand their work.
- Teachers mark students work regularly. However, marking does not always provide sufficient guidance to students on how to improve their work. In addition, when guidance is given, teachers do not check to see if students have acted on the advice given. Some teachers do not always insist that students, particularly boys, present their work neatly and accurately.
- Sometimes, the questions which teachers use do not require students to think deeply enough and this means that opportunities are missed to help students fully understand important concepts.
- Although inconsistent, teaching is improving. In some classes, students make good progress because teachers use assessment information well to set work which is appropriately challenging and motivating. In addition, in some classes, marking is very effective because it helps students to improve their work.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement is not always as good as it could be for different groups of students, including the most-able students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, because teaching is not consistently good. Currently, students make expected progress from their starting points but too few make better than this.
- Most students join the academy with attainment which is well below average. As a result, many have significant ground to catch up during their time in the academy. When the academy opened in 2012, many students in all year groups were still a long way behind; this is an important reason why examination results at the end of Year 11 have been well below average for the past two years.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs do not always make good progress because work set is not consistently at the right level. This means that these students sometimes do not develop and improve their skills effectively enough or fully understand the work.
- The progress that the most-able students make is variable because work is not always challenging enough. However, the achievement of this group of students is improving. In Year 11 in 2014, a higher proportion of students achieved the top grades than in the previous year.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make good progress because they benefit from good additional support, when it is required.
- The academy spends the additional pupil premium funding effectively by providing additional staff who offer one-to-one or small-group academic and personal support when it is needed. As a result, disadvantaged students are catching up with others across many subjects and year groups, and many are achieving better than their peers. However, as with all students, there is some variability. In 2014, the academy's own unvalidated data show that disadvantaged students in Year 11 achieved results that were, on average, almost a grade lower in English and a full grade lower in mathematics. Compared to all students nationally in 2013 (no national data were available for 2014 at the time of the inspection), Year 11 students achieved one and two-thirds of a grade lower in both English and mathematics.

- Some students are supported by additional Year 7 'catch-up' funding, which helps those who join the academy with attainment below the expected level in English and mathematics. The academy uses this funding effectively to provide additional reading classes, for example. Most students are catching up in English and mathematics.
- The academy does not enter students early for GCSE English and mathematics. Consequently, students are able to have the full amount of time to study these courses.
- The small number of students who attend other institutions to study vocational courses for part of the week make good progress. Most students achieve qualifications which prepare them for further study or employment with training.
- The students who are currently in Year 11 are making much better progress because the improvements in teaching are having a greater impact on students' learning. These students have benefitted from teaching which has been improving over a longer period of time than the previous groups of Year 11 students. In 2014, the proportion of Year 11 students who achieved grades A* to C improved from the previous year in many subjects.

The sixth form provision is good

- Students usually join the sixth form with attainment which is below average. Attainment by the end of Year 13 is rising and getting closer to the national average because most students make good progress in a range of subjects.
- Teaching is good in the sixth form. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects that they teach and a good understanding of examination specifications. They use this understanding effectively to help students improve their work and progress to a higher grade. Teachers know their students well in the sixth form and they match work accurately to students' skills and abilities.
- The behaviour of students in the sixth form is good. Students have good attitudes to learning and work hard. Students feel safe at the academy and they have a strong understanding of safety matters.
- The leadership of the sixth form is good because it has ensured that all groups of students make good progress and that attainment is rising. The curriculum is organised well so that students are able to study courses which build on their attainment in Key Stage 4. Students who need to re-take GCSE mathematics or English are taught well. In addition to academic study, students are able to develop their personal and social skills in a range of activities including, for example, supporting younger students with reading.
- The reason why the sixth form is more effective than the main academy is because good leadership has ensured that teaching is consistently good which leads to good progress and promotes positive attitudes to learning.

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	136948
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	424941

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1301
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Simpson
Principal	Rachel Steele
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01604 402121
Fax number	01604 400361
Email address	admin@westonfavellacademy.org

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