

Greenwood Academy

Farnborough Road, Birmingham, B35 7NL

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	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.

- Under the outstanding leadership of the principal, the academy has been transformed and the quality of education is improving rapidly.
- Governors and leaders at all levels are very ambitious for the success of the academy. They work tirelessly to improve the quality of education students receive, their achievement and the reputation of the academy in the local community.
- Effective systems have improved behaviour and, as a result, students attend regularly and attitudes to learning are now good.
- The academy promotes equal opportunities very well. As a result, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and disadvantaged students make good progress.
- The provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs and for students who face challenging circumstances is exceptional, with learning for these students being located at the heart of the academy.
- The curriculum is well designed to match the needs of students. A wide range of opportunities enables students to acquire the skills, values and aspirations to succeed and to be well prepared for the next stage of their education. The curriculum ensures that students are taught to respect people's differences and the values of modern Britain.
- Teaching is good and improving. Teachers create a positive climate for learning where students feel valued and supported. Lessons are carefully planned and made interesting, so that students learn well.
- Students make outstanding progress in English and achievement is rising quickly in mathematics and in other subjects.
- The sixth form provision is good. Students follow suitable courses, make good progress and are being well prepared for their future choices.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Current leaders have not yet been in post long enough to secure outstanding teaching and to enable enough students to make outstanding progress.
- Not all subject leaders are as effective at improving teaching and achievement in their areas as the best in the academy.
- Gaps in performance between subject areas and different groups of students have not yet been fully closed.
- Teachers do not always provide enough challenge to enable the most able students to achieve the highest grades. Although the quality of marking has improved considerably, the impact of teachers' feedback in improving students' work is not consistently good.
- Opportunities to develop students' basic skills, in reading, writing, communication and numeracy, are not used as well as they might be in all subject areas.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the work of the academy and the behaviour of students both in lessons and during informal times, such as between lessons and at lunch and break times.
- Inspectors observed parts of 29 lessons, including three that were observed jointly with members of the leadership team. In addition, a member of the leadership team spent time with an inspector to review work in students' books in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with students, the principal, senior leaders, leaders of subjects and pastoral areas, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Regional Director of the academy sponsor. In addition, inspectors had informal discussions with students and staff at break and lunch times.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation including the academy's self evaluation, improvement plans and minutes of governing body meetings, data on students' progress, attainment, attendance and exclusions and information about how teachers' performance links to salary scales.
- Forty responses to the staff questionnaire were considered. No responses were available to the online questionnaire, Parent View, but inspectors considered evidence from the school's own surveys of the views of parents, staff and students.

Inspection team

Gwendoline Coates, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Chris Chapman

Seconded Inspector

David Piercy

Additional Inspector

Janet Bird

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Greenwood Academy converted to become an academy on 1 January 2013. When its predecessor school, Castle Vale Performing Arts College, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be satisfactory overall. The academy is sponsored by the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET). In September 2014, the academy opened a sixth form providing a range of level 3 qualifications.
- The academy has been through significant turbulence, including four separate principals over an 18 month period. The current principal took up his post at Greenwood Academy in June 2013.
- Greenwood Academy is smaller than the average secondary school.
- More than one in five students are disabled or have special educational needs, which is greater than the national average.
- More than two in every three students are eligible for pupil premium funding (extra funding provided by the government for students who are eligible for free school meals or are looked after by the local authority), which is well above the national average.
- The vast majority of students are White British.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. This specialist autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) base is funded for 17 students.
- A small number of students (six at the time of the inspection) are educated off-site. This provision involves partnerships with the following organisations: EBN Academy, City United and Sanctuary.
- The academy has received support in establishing appropriate standards for sixth form teaching and assessment from Southam College, an outstanding school.
- The academy meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress at Key Stage 4.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' achievement by:
 - ensuring that every student makes consistently good progress in each subject they study and that a majority make outstanding progress
 - removing any remaining gaps in the rates of progress made by different groups of students across subjects
 - increasing the proportion of students reaching the highest grades at GCSE.
- Improve the quality of teaching, so that all students make at least good progress and more make outstanding progress. Do this by:
 - making sure that teachers adapt work so that all students, and especially the more-able, are challenged enough to achieve as well as they should
 - improving the ability of teachers in all subjects to develop the reading, writing, communication and numeracy skills of students in their lessons
 - requiring all teachers to adopt best practice in the academy by encouraging students to use marking feedback to improve their work
 - making sure that leaders take prompt and effective action to tackle the remaining areas of relatively weaker teaching.
- Ensure that all subject leaders are as good as the best in ensuring that in their subjects, the quality of teaching, the progress students make and their behaviour are at least good and more are outstanding.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- After a turbulent period in relation to the leadership of the academy, the current principal has, in a short space of time, brought about significant change in the academy's culture and ethos. He has succeeded in raising the expectations and ambition of students, staff and parents. He has focused strongly on improving the quality of teaching and improving attitudes to learning and to behaviour. His key principles of transparency, integrity, honesty and trust are shared and emphasised again and again by staff. Staff now feel they can contribute and suggest ideas, confident that they will be listened to. Students echo these views and talk about their pride in the academy, the significant improvements they are experiencing in the quality of education they receive and the fact that their views are noted and acted upon.
- The principal is supported by a strong team of senior leaders and an increasingly strong team of middle leaders, such as heads of subjects and heads of year. He has introduced highly effective succession planning by creating developmental opportunities for middle leaders to join the senior leadership team and for teachers to take on responsibility areas within their departments.
- Middle leadership is improving rapidly both in relation to subject and pastoral areas. Middle leadership in English and mathematics is a real strength and has brought about significant improvement in the quality of teaching and in achievement in these areas. Leadership in these areas is providing examples of excellent practice for other subject areas, where leadership is not yet as strong and not having as successful an impact on the quality of teaching, achievement and behaviour.
- The principal's strategy of placing learning and support for students with challenging behaviour, and for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, at the heart of the academy has emphasised its inclusive nature and its strong focus on providing equality of opportunity for all. Excellent leadership and provision in this area, together with a well-managed programme of professional development, are leading to very high levels of success for these groups of students. The provision has been judged as outstanding by the local authority and this is well deserved. The academy's provision for ASD students is of high quality and has been used as a case study in the National Guidelines for Autism.
- Leadership of teaching is strong. Leaders systematically check the quality of teaching across the academy. They use these checks to reach accurate judgements about the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and to decide appropriate plans for further improvement. The academy's judgements about teaching are quality assured and moderated by external partners.
- High expectations and the provision of high levels of professional support ensure the quality of teaching is improving at a pace that enables students to make good progress. However, the academy has not managed to secure outstanding teaching overall to meet its future aspirations. There remain some weaknesses in teaching that mean students do not always make good progress. Leaders recognise that this needs to be tackled promptly and are taking appropriate steps to do so.
- The performance of individual teachers is checked against a clear framework of expected standards and targets related to the progress students make – targets that are linked clearly to teachers' progress up the salary scale.
- Rigorous and highly effective procedures are in place to monitor students' performance in relation to the progress they make, their attendance and their behaviour. When underperformance is identified, prompt and effective support is put in place to bring about improvement.
- Self-evaluation is thorough, honest and accurate. The principal is highly strategic and has ensured that, among the range of improvements that were needed in the academy when he took over, the most urgent priorities were pursued, with significant success. The track record of current leaders, offers clear evidence of good capacity for continued improvement.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have reviewed the range of subjects offered so that students now pursue high quality academic and vocational qualifications that are better matched to their

needs and enable them to achieve well. There are well thought out policies to ensure all students have the opportunity to improve their literacy skills. 'Accelerate' groups in Year 7 and Year 8 offer low-attaining students extra support and tuition in literacy and numeracy. The needs of students who attend off-site provision are well met and their progress, attendance and behaviour are monitored effectively. There is excellent focus on transition arrangements at each stage and good provision is made for students in the new sixth form.

- The academy's commitment to developing the employability skills, aspirations and values of its students is impressive. Partnerships with businesses, the community and universities provide students with a range of opportunities that give them a good understanding of choices about their next steps. Careers education is a well-planned, integral part of the curriculum. As a result, the academy has significantly reduced the number of students at the end of Key Stage 4 who do not continue in education or some form of training.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted through the curriculum and in the wider life of the academy. It is fostered through a range of visits, and by excellent provision in the performing arts, sports and through community-based activities. Assemblies, religious education, and 'Culture and Values' lessons give many opportunities for students to reflect on important issues and to prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- There is a very strong focus on promoting equality of opportunity for all and tackling discrimination. This is particularly evident in the way the academy supports disabled students and those who have special educational needs and in the success it has had in narrowing gaps in the achievement of all groups of students.
- Very good use is made of pupil premium funding. As a result gaps in achievement between disadvantaged students and other students are narrowing rapidly and, in English for example, have been eradicated.
- The academy sponsor, AET, has provided valuable support for the school in relation to human resource issues connected with the restructuring of staffing that the present principal introduced when he took over in June 2013. It has also provided support for the academy in developing partnership with outside organisations and with curriculum support for mathematics.
- Arrangements for safeguarding students are effective and meet all statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the academy is a strength.
 - Governors provide an excellent mix of skills and experience. They fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of the academy from performance data. They know how well pupil premium funding is being used and what impact it is having on the achievement of disadvantaged students. They understand the need for challenging targets for teachers in order to improve students' achievement and are fully informed about the new performance management approach and how this rewards good performance by teachers.
 - They know about the recent turbulence in leadership and are acutely aware of the need to drive the academy forward and to raise its reputation and develop positive links with parents and carers and the local community.
 - They systematically challenge the principal and senior leaders, and like them, are absolutely committed to providing the best education possible and thus improving the lives of students at the academy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- High expectations of behaviour and the generally consistent use of the behaviour policy have led to clearly improved attitudes to learning over time.

- Good behaviour is supported by clearly organised pastoral systems where students know and understand expectations for behaviour both in and outside of the classroom. An effective reward system encourages students in all years to work towards or exceed the academy's expectations. A well organised behaviour policy ensures that any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with quickly and appropriately and support is put in place to encourage improved behaviour.
- The good behaviour of students in the academy and of those in alternative provision is clearly linked to much higher expectations by leaders, improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, in the curriculum and, more generally, in the support students receive. The academy places great value on its learning environment and many departmental corridors and classrooms inspire learning. Most students are ready and keen to learn and their attitudes to learning are good. Extra-curricular and enhancement activities throughout the day and at other times further encourage students' good behaviour.
- The school communicates effectively with parents and carers, and staff do all that they can to support the progress and development of the students in their care.
- Good multi-agency support is provided but, in addition, the development of strong in-house skills has had a very positive impact on students. Case study evidence of students who face considerable challenges in their lives demonstrates the impact of this support. For example, students who, in the past, were regularly excluded from school, have now become role models for others, attending regularly, achieving well and having high aspirations.
- Improved behaviour is reflected in reductions in the number of permanent and fixed period exclusions and the significant reduction in incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders recognise that further reductions can still be made and have strategies in place to bring this about.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- The academy places great importance on the safety of its students. All staff play a shared role in ensuring that students in their care, including those in alternative provision, are safe and secure.
- The academy is proactive and clear in its approach to dealing with bullying and as a result, bullying incidents have reduced considerably and are now rare. Students are aware of the different types of bullying and are confident about what to do if they experience or witness bullying of any type.
- The academy's curriculum successfully encourages students to develop an understanding of the risks they may encounter. Students say they have confidence in approaching staff if they have concerns or worries.
- Students are respectful of one another and the staff at the academy. They appreciate the hard work that has been contributed by support staff, teachers and leaders to create a caring and safe environment in which they can learn and develop. One student said 'They just care for you here'. Another, referring to the ASD base, said, 'Base support is excellent and will sort out issues and help others to understand'.
- Attendance has improved significantly since June 2013 and is now broadly in line with the national average. Persistent absence has reduced significantly and is now below the national average. This is a result of a determined effort by the academy to support students in this category. The academy works tirelessly to promote good attendance and to support students whose attendance limits progress. Leaders are not complacent and have strategies in place to bring about further improvement.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and enables most students to make good or better progress in learning.
- Good relationships, built on trust, mutual respect and high expectations, are an important characteristic of teaching in the academy. The vast majority of students are keen to learn and get on well with their work.
- Teachers mark students' work regularly. In the best examples, marking feedback has a powerful impact on progress because students are given clear direction on what they need to do to improve and are given time to act on this. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson, students made rapid progress because they were purposefully using the guidance that their teacher had provided to help them improve their work. Although more teachers are adopting this good practice, it is not consistent across the academy and, as a result, marking feedback does not always help students to improve as much as it could.
- Lessons are well structured. Teachers share learning objectives so that students have a clear understanding of what they are expected to have learned by the end of their lessons. Students refer back to these objectives regularly so that they know how much progress they have made and whether they have been successful in their learning.
- During lessons, teachers regularly check students' understanding. When students do not fully understand or are struggling, teachers provide extra guidance and support or change their approach so that students learn more effectively. Students learn at a good pace in the majority of lessons because they are engaged and involved in their learning.
- Questioning is used well to probe students' thinking and encourage them to develop their ideas. In a Year 12 food science and nutrition lesson, students presented the findings of their research into how the body uses nutrients. The teacher used questioning highly effectively to get students to explain their findings further, speculate on reasons why the body behaves in the way it does, and make connections with learning from previous lessons.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled. Their thorough understanding of the needs of the students in their care enables them to offer effective support to ensure students are fully involved in lessons and make good progress.
- In some lessons, learning is less successful. When activities are not well matched to students' needs, a small minority of students can lose concentration. The most-able students are not always challenged sufficiently and, in some lessons, are given the same work as others or are not moved on to more difficult activities quickly enough. As a result, the most-able students do not always make the progress they are capable of.
- There is evidence that many students read widely and a range of initiatives for all year groups are in place to encourage this. A groups of Year 10 boys said that, in previous years, they had never been interested in reading. However, since formal reading time and suitable reading material had been introduced in their English lessons, they now continued to read in their own time at home because they had been 'hooked' by the books suggested for them. Despite the many positive indications of improved reading, the academy recognises that more still needs to be done to ensure all students read widely and often. Opportunities to develop reading, writing, speaking and mathematics across all subjects are sometimes missed because not all teachers have yet acquired systematic approaches to providing them.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement has improved overall. From starting points in Year 7 that are significantly below average, students at Greenwood Academy reach standards by Year 11 that are broadly in line with the national average and improving.
- There has been significant improvement in both English and mathematics but particularly in English.

Ninety one per cent of students in 2014 gained GCSE English at grade C or above, which is well above the national average. While in most subjects, students are not performing as well as in English and mathematics, the rate of improvement across all subjects is rapid.

- Progress across year groups in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, is consistently strong and students' work provides good evidence of this. From their starting points, most students make at least expected progress in English and mathematics and, for English, rates of progress are well above the national average.
- For disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including students in the ASD base, their progress is good and has been improving rapidly. Students attending alternative or off-site provision achieve well and in line with other students in the academy.
- Gaps in attainment between disadvantaged students and other students both within the school and nationally are narrowing rapidly. In English, these gaps have been eradicated with over 90% of disadvantaged students and over 90% of other students making at least expected progress. In GCSE English, disadvantaged students attain less than half a grade below other students in the academy and a quarter of a grade above other students nationally. In GCSE mathematics, they attain just over a grade below other students in the academy and just under a grade below other students nationally. Gaps in attainment in both English and mathematics indicate significant narrowing of the gaps compared to previous years. However, small gaps still exist and the academy is determined to maintain its focus on narrowing these for all groups of students.
- Despite the very strong improvement in both their attainment and progress, the most-able students are not yet making the highest rates of progress they are capable of. Early entry to GCSE is used where deemed appropriate and does not limit the potential of the most able students.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Leaders have clear procedures in place for checking and evaluating the quality of education in the new sixth form, so that they can plan for its continued improvement. They have taken robust steps to ensure that teachers are well prepared for the delivery of the sixth form programmes of study. A partnership forged with the sixth form of an outstanding school has supported teachers with suitable training, and made sure that their assessments of students' work are accurate.
- The curriculum has been carefully planned so that students can follow courses that are matched to their needs and abilities. It is sufficiently broad to enable students to pursue high quality academic and vocational courses that cater for their range of interests. The curriculum meets the requirements of the 16-19 study programme. Information, advice and guidance are effective. Students say that they are well supported and are happy with the choice of courses they have made.
- Mentors meet with students regularly to make sure that they are making good progress, check that they are happy, and explore future options. Students have opportunities to attend universities, complete voluntary work and all students, including those following academic courses, will undertake a work experience placement. Good plans are in place to ensure that students are thoroughly prepared for entry to employment, further or higher education or training.
- Sixth form students' behaviour is very mature and they are good role models for younger students. They feel safe in the academy and, because of the good advice they receive, they understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Teaching is good. Students benefit from small group sizes. Questioning is used well to develop and extend students' thinking, and lessons enable students to develop their ability to work independently and to develop research skills. Attitudes to learning in lessons are excellent.
- Information about the progress of students, at this early stage, indicates that students are on track to achieve well.

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	139048
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	447846

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
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	661
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Richmond
Principal	Harry French
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0121 464 6101
Fax number	0121 464 7069
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