

Rawlins Academy

Loughborough Road, Quorn, Loughborough, LE12 8DY

Inspection dates 10–11 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The gaps in achievement between disadvantaged students and their peers, both within the school and nationally, have not closed sufficiently over time.
- The sixth form requires improvement because not enough students studying academic courses make or exceed the progress expected of them, particularly in English language and English literature.
- Not enough students in Key Stage 4 make or exceed the progress expected of them in mathematics.
- Teachers do not always ensure that tasks are set at the right level of difficulty for students, particularly those in mixed-ability groups.
- The quality of the written feedback that teachers provide for students is inconsistent.
- Teachers do not always have high expectations of their students. Work that is poorly presented is often accepted.
- Students' attitudes to learning are not routinely positive. Teachers do not apply the academy's behaviour policy consistently in order to improve this.
- Senior leaders' views on the quality of teaching in the academy are over-optimistic.
- The academy's professional development programme for teachers is not coordinated well enough and, therefore, does not have enough impact on improving the quality of teaching.
- Governors rely too heavily on information they receive from the Principal about teaching and students' achievement, rather than verifying how well the school is doing for themselves.

The school has the following strengths

- Levels of achievement improved in several subjects at GCSE level in 2014 when compared to the previous year, particularly in English.
- The proportion of the most-able disadvantaged students who made good progress in mathematics in 2014 was well above the national average.
- Students make good progress in vocational subjects in the sixth form.
- The extra-curricular programme is extensive and makes a positive contribution to the development of those students who take advantage of it.
- The academy's careers advice and guidance is effective.
- The academy is well-regarded by members of staff, students and parents.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students learning in 57 lessons taught by 55 different teachers. Eight of these lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior and middle leaders, and three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with students in meetings as well as informally in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the academy’s evaluation of its own performance, the academy improvement plan, data on students’ attainment and progress, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding procedures, evaluations on the quality of teaching and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed a selection of work in students’ books.
- Inspectors took into account 151 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 82 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ian McNeilly, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Russell Barr	Additional Inspector
Cathryn Richards	Additional Inspector
Beverley Strange	Additional Inspector
Roger Whittall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rawlins Academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school for students aged 11-18.
- Formerly a 14-18 school, this is the first year that the academy has had students in every year group from Year 7.
- Almost a fifth of students receive pupil premium funding. This is less than the national average. This additional government funding is for children looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- At approximately one fifth, the proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The school runs a specialist unit for 26 students who have moderate learning difficulties. Prior to September 2014, the specialist unit was just for post-16 students. Year 7 students were integrated from this academic year, along with a very small number of Key Stage 4 students.
- The proportion of students who are White British is well above average.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision at Brooksby College in Melton Mowbray; Gaz Autos and Trans4m Hair in Leicester and at the following nine providers, all of which are in Loughborough: Loughborough College; Ashmount School; Caspian Kennels; Taylors Hair Salon; Aim; Stonehouse Farm; Mountfields Lodge; Peter Pan Playgroup.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by:
 - ensuring that tasks are set at the right level of difficulty for students, particularly those in mixed-ability groups
 - ensuring that the written feedback students receive is more consistent, evaluative and, where appropriate, offers extended challenge
 - raising teachers' expectations of what students can achieve, including in the presentation of their work.
- Improve achievement by:
 - increasing the rates of progress in mathematics at Key Stage 4
 - increasing the rates of progress of the academy's disadvantaged students, particularly through ensuring the pupil premium is used to best effect
 - increasing the rates of progress of those students studying academic courses in the sixth form, particularly in English language and English literature.
- Improve behaviour by ensuring the academy's behaviour policy is consistently applied in order to improve attitudes to learning.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring the recently introduced system of performance management results in senior leaders having a more accurate view of the quality of teaching in the academy and a subsequent improvement in this area
 - coordinating the academy's professional development programme so that it effectively addresses whole school priorities and best meets the needs of individual teachers
 - ensuring governors verify information about the school's performance rather than relying too heavily on the Principal to keep them informed.

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

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders and governors identified that students in the academy underachieved in key subject areas in 2013. While leaders ensured that improvements were made in 2014, particularly in English at Key Stage 4, achievement overall in the academy is not yet good.
- The Principal, senior leaders and governors have an over-optimistic view of the quality of teaching in the academy. A new, more rigorous system of performance management has been recently introduced to make judgements about teaching more accurate. This is being linked effectively to the pay progression of teachers.
- The academy's programme of professional development for its teachers is not well organised. It is not linked closely enough to the academy's priorities, or the most pressing needs of individual teachers.
- Senior leaders keep a detailed account of the use of pupil premium funding. However, this is not being used effectively because the gaps in achievement between disadvantaged students and their peers are not closing over time.
- Despite the considerable size of the sixth-form provision, there is no single leader with responsibility for and oversight of this; leadership is shared among three members of staff, including the Principal. This leadership team has not secured good achievement for those students who pursue academic courses.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, which meets students' needs with regards to preparing them for their next stage in employment or education. The academy's programme of extra-curricular activities is good and it makes a positive contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students can take advantage of opportunities as diverse as trampolining, ukulele playing, religious discussion and science experimentation. Sport is particularly well represented, but there is also an extensive programme of support for academic subjects. There is a wide range of academic options to choose from in the sixth form, complemented by a smaller number of vocational options.
- There are a substantial number of thought-provoking quotes displayed around the academy buildings which link to different faiths, beliefs and ways of thinking. These promote students' spiritual and moral development. In interviews with inspectors, students said they had recently considered the concept of British values and senior leaders' approach to this is published on their website. Key Stage 3 students, in particular, have good opportunities to consider aspects such as the rule of law through their curriculum. The opportunities senior leaders provide, both within the curriculum and through the enrichment programme, ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted effectively and that students are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The academy fosters good relations with parents and outside agencies and ensures that discrimination is not tolerated.
- Middle leaders have a thorough knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of their areas of responsibility. Their line management of colleagues is robust and results in specific targets for improvement being set. Middle leaders are personally involved in improving the quality of teaching, though the impact of this still requires improvement because of weaknesses in the academy's professional development strategy.
- A new leader with responsibility for disabled students and those with special educational needs was appointed in September. This individual's responsibilities include the academy's specialist unit for those students with moderate learning difficulties. Although it is too early to judge this leader's impact on achievement, there have already been systemic improvements, particularly regarding monitoring the effectiveness of the interventions which take place, and on students' attendance.
- The progress, attendance and behaviour of the small number of students in alternative provision are mainly monitored through the Loughborough Inclusion Partnership, which is a partnership of nine

secondary schools in the local area. The academy has recently made its own monitoring more effective, especially in terms of attendance, as academy members of staff now check every session with each provider.

- The academy's careers advice and guidance is effective and students speak positively about it. They have regular opportunities to develop their personal and employability skills through a wide range of events, activities and through the academy's house system. Examples include acting as house captains, charity leaders and leading house councils. They also volunteer in and out of school, support younger students through the vertical tutoring system and gain access to bespoke work placements to support their university and careers choices. Two independent careers advisers visit the school twice a week; the students themselves choose if they want to see them, though all disadvantaged students take up this opportunity. Support is offered for those Year 11 students who want to apply to further education colleges. The Principal offers advice and guidance to those students who apply to either Oxford or Cambridge universities.

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements and are effective.

- **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are committed to improving the academy and they have become increasingly challenging to senior leaders. However, their effectiveness has been limited as they are overly-reliant on the information given to them by the Principal. Therefore, their view on the quality of teaching and achievement in the school is in line with that of the academy's senior leaders. Governors have plans to work with an independent school adviser to improve their practice in this regard, and to make them more informed about the academy's performance. Governors are involved in the performance management of the Principal, and in decisions concerning the pay progression of teachers. They are aware of how the academy tackles any underperformance. Governors are aware of their statutory duties and ensure they are met. The link governor for safeguarding updated her knowledge via training this academic year; she liaises with the assistant principal with responsibility for child protection. Governors recently discussed the concept of British values and matching these to the academy's Christian ethos with a view to better preparing students for life in modern Britain. This is still at a developmental stage.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- Students' attitudes to learning require improvement. On too many occasions learning opportunities are affected by low-level disruption. However, they are not helped in this when they are given tasks that are too easy or not engaging. This is not effectively addressed by teachers because they do not consistently apply the academy's behaviour policy.
- Students' attitudes to learning can be positive and have a good impact on the progress they make. However, this does not happen frequently enough.
- Students' views of behaviour standards in lessons vary widely, but the vast majority of parents and members of staff feel that behaviour in the academy is good.
- Historically, rates of attendance have been too low and rates of exclusion have been too high. Improvements were made in both regards last academic year, and this improving picture has continued.
- Students' behaviour around the site is good. They mix well together during social times and when moving from one lesson to another. Students are polite, helpful and friendly.
- The behaviour of the students who attend the academy's specialist unit is good and their attitudes to learning have a positive impact on the progress they make.
- The behaviour of the small number of students who experience alternative provision is monitored by

senior leaders. When applicable, steps are taken to address behaviour issues, though the results of monitoring do not reflect concerns in this area.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students feel safe in the academy and members of staff, particularly those in pastoral and support roles, work effectively to ensure that this is the case. Members of staff make themselves available for students who need support.
- The academy employs a range of additional members of staff who make an effective contribution to supporting students' well-being and safety, including an educational psychologist, an art therapy teacher, a school nurse and a school counsellor.
- Students who attend the academy's specialist unit feel safe and appreciate the support they receive.
- A small number of students referred to bullying incidents in the academy; senior leaders have a 'no tolerance' policy on this behaviour and students know where to go to seek support if it is necessary.
- The academy's safeguarding procedures are secure.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it has not been consistently good enough over time to ensure good outcomes for students across all subjects, particularly in mathematics at Key Stage 4 and English at Key Stage 5.
- Teachers do not always plan work at the right level of difficulty to ensure that all students make good progress. This is particularly the case in mixed-ability groups. Too much activity is based on low-level challenge that does not stretch the most-able students or allow the less-able students to make progress beyond that level.
- The quality and frequency of the written feedback that teachers give to students is inconsistent. At its best, marking is analytical and requires student response. At its worst, it is missing for several weeks and when it does occur is too simplistic to make a contribution to student progress.
- Both of the above points were areas for development the last time the academy was inspected in February 2013. Senior leaders have not ensured sufficient improvements in these areas since that time.
- Teachers' expectations of students are not always high enough. This is reflected in students' exercise books where sub-standard work in terms of content and presentation has been accepted by teachers.
- The teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics has improved in the last year, as evidenced by improved rates of progress of the students who completed Year 11 in 2014. English is taught effectively, though literacy development across the curriculum at Key Stage 3 is not being fully supported because of inconsistencies in teachers' written feedback. The teaching of mathematics still requires improvement.
- Where teaching is of good quality, it is characterised by good subject knowledge, a brisk pace with engaging and well-judged strategies which match students' needs and abilities.
- There is good and outstanding practice in the academy. Sixth form students with learning difficulties showed a high level of engagement and enjoyment in a drama lesson on the First World War. Disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs made excellent progress in a Year 11 science lesson where they were all encouraged to attempt tasks at the limits of their capabilities. Outstanding questioning ensured students were highly engaged and challenged in a Year 10 lesson on aboriginal art. Year 11 students in an English lesson, and boys in particular, showed detailed prior

knowledge of a Shakespeare text and were effectively encouraged to develop personal responses to thought-provoking questions.

- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs have additional support when they are in mainstream classes. This ensures that these students make the same level of progress as other students in this group nationally.
- While the admission of younger students has presented some challenges to members of staff working in the academy's specialist unit for students with moderate learning difficulties, the overall quality of teaching is good over time as evidenced by good outcomes for post-16 students.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students who completed Year 11 in 2013 underachieved in mathematics and particularly in English. Improvements were made in both subject areas in 2014, particularly in English where the academy's students achieved rates of progress above the national average. By the end of Year 11, students' progress in mathematics was average. Not enough students exceed the progress expected of them in mathematics.
- The rates of progress made by disadvantaged students in English have been volatile over a three-year period whereas progress of these students in mathematics has been less subject to fluctuation. However, the result is the same for both subjects: the gaps in achievement between the academy's disadvantaged students and their peers, both within the academy and on a national basis, have not closed sufficiently over time. Based on the first examination entry of those students who completed Year 11 in 2014, disadvantaged students were a GCSE grade behind their peers in the academy and nationally in English; in mathematics, they were a grade and a half behind.
- The academy's most-able students who completed Year 11 in 2014 achieved in line with national averages in English, and a greater proportion of these students than seen nationally exceeded the progress expected of them in this subject. These most-able students also achieved in line with national averages for mathematics though a smaller proportion than that seen nationally exceeded the progress expected of them. The most-able disadvantaged students made excellent progress in mathematics. In other subject areas, the academy's most-able students made progress in line with expectations though there were some variations. These students underachieved in geography and Spanish yet made very good progress in media and physical education.
- Students make good progress in French, physical education and sciences at GCSE level.
- The academy's data for current Year 11 students show an improving picture in terms of achievement across subjects.
- In line with other students in the academy, disabled students and those with special educational needs made much better progress in English and mathematics in 2014 when compared to the previous year. The support these students receive has a good impact on the progress they make.
- The students who attend the specialist unit are well served and success rates for the courses they take are high. These students are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Students are encouraged to read widely. Inspectors observed Year 8 students being directed to read their own books at the beginning of one lesson while administrative tasks were carried out, though this strategy was not consistently used. Students are encouraged to borrow books from the academy's library, and a weekly book club takes place there. A quiz-based software system is used to encourage wider reading, particularly among the academy's younger students, and this has proved to be popular.
- The funding for Year 7 literacy and mathematics catch-up has been used effectively, particularly to improve reading standards. Teaching assistants and sixth form students lead small reading groups and breakfast phonics sessions reinforce the necessary basics of decoding texts. Literacy and mathematics enhancement activities are available after school. These strategies are helping the targeted students to

develop their skills.

- Early entry for English and mathematics GCSEs has been used widely by the academy. It has been of benefit, particularly to the most-able students in mathematics. When these students achieved very well in this subject, they were then directed to more challenging courses such as statistics or additional mathematics. When students of all abilities did not achieve their expected grade, in both English language and mathematics, they studied further in an attempt to improve it.
- Senior leaders' monitoring of the progress made by the small number of students in alternative provision indicates that their achievement is generally similar to that of other students, taking into account the range of activities they pursue in these settings.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement in the sixth form. Senior leaders have not ensured that students studying academic courses make good progress. These courses make up the vast majority of the provision's examination entries. Leaders understand the strengths and areas for development of this provision, and they know their students well.
- There is a wide range of courses available to students. In 2014, 28 different A level courses were available, and these were complemented by a smaller range of vocational courses. The curriculum meets the needs of students.
- Students who complete their courses are well prepared for their next stage in education or employment. The majority go on to study at university; some opt to take up apprenticeships or employment opportunities. School data show that of those students who left the academy in 2014 and went to university, 16% progressed to Russell Group institutions. Less than one tenth of students are classed as not being in education, employment or training.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement because not enough students have made the progress expected of them in academic courses. This was the case for 2013 and 2014. In 2014, performance in AS levels was below that in A levels. Those studying English literature and English language performed particularly poorly. A level students in mathematics, art graphics and art photography made good progress.
- The very small number of disadvantaged students in the sixth form performed better than their peers in 2014.
- Those students who pursue vocational courses make good progress generally, and particularly so in creative media.
- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching across subjects in the sixth form. As a result, the progress made varies significantly between qualification type and subject area.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is good. Students exhibit very positive attitudes towards learning. They collaborate well in and out of class. They enjoy the positive relationships they have with their teachers and value the support they are given, particularly through the enhancement activities and the individual tutoring they receive.

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	137640
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	450581

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	1431
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Lathbury
Principal	Callum Orr
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2013
Telephone number	01509 622800
Fax number	01509 416668
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