

Cordeaux Academy

North Holme Road, Louth, LN11 0HG

Inspection dates

9–10 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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

- Students do not make good progress in a wide range of subjects, including mathematics.
- While the quality of teaching has improved, it is not yet good across all subjects or year groups.
- All too often, teachers do not use the information they have about students' achievement to match learning activities closely to their abilities. This is particularly so for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and the most able.
- Disadvantaged students do not progress as well as others. Although an extensive range of support is available to these learners, leaders and governors have not checked its effectiveness in raising achievement.
- Staff turnover in mathematics has had a negative impact on students' attainment and progress. Teachers do not insist on high standards of presentation and work, and leaders have not successfully watched over the impact of teaching in this subject.
- Teachers' marking does not help students to improve their work. Teachers do not routinely check to make sure students respond to their comments and advice.
- Targets for students' progress, particularly in mathematics, are not sufficiently challenging. Some students do not understand what is required of them or how to solve problems.
- The sixth form requires improvement. The range of subjects available to students is too narrow. Progress and achievement in academic subjects are not good. Too few students stay on at age 16, and many Year 12 students leave before completing their courses.
- Leaders and governors have introduced a range of initiatives to improve teaching and raise achievement, but they have not yet had a full impact. Leaders at all levels have not yet checked these actions fully for effectiveness and value for money.

The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour has improved significantly, and students show good attitudes to learning. Fixed-term exclusions have reduced to below the national average.
- Students are polite and friendly. They report feeling safe, and are safe in the academy. Most enjoy attending, as demonstrated by their above-average attendance.
- In 2014 students made good progress in English and results in this subject improved. Sixth form students do well on work-related courses.
- An extensive programme of educational visits, residential trips including overseas experiences, sporting events and other activities help promote students' well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons. Six of these observations were completed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also observed students at breaks and lunchtimes, and attended tutorial periods.
- Discussions were held with students, staff, governors, the interim principal, and the regional lead for education from Academies Enterprise Trust.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also took account of 36 responses to staff questionnaires.
- A wide range of documents was examined including samples of students’ work, information about students’ progress, the academy’s development plan and self-evaluation, records of any poor behaviour, records of governors’ meetings and safeguarding documents.
- Inspectors listened to students read, and observed reading support lessons and the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make).

Inspection team

Sherry Gladwin, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alison Broomfield	Additional Inspector
Jeremy Seymour	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cordeaux Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 January 2013. It is part of the Academies Enterprise Trust chain. When its predecessor school, Cordeaux School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British.
- At around 27%, the proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium is average. This is additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- About 36% of the students are disabled or have special educational needs. This is well above average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The newly appointed principal will take up post in January 2015. An interim principal is currently in post.
- No students attend off-site courses at other educational institutions, trainers or employers.
- The mathematics department has experienced turbulence in staffing.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement in the main school and the sixth form by:
 - improving the quality of teaching in mathematics so that students learn to solve problems and show their workings clearly
 - ensuring teachers use the information they have about students' attainment and progress to provide learning activities that challenge all groups, particularly disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and the most able
 - checking that teachers mark students' work regularly using the academy's policy, and include helpful comments which clearly tell students how to improve their work
 - checking that students respond to teachers' comments, make corrections and follow teachers' advice
 - ensuring that teachers set high expectations for students' presentation and standard of work
 - improving the range of courses in the sixth form.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that challenging targets are set for students, and that they understand these targets and how to reach them
 - making sure all subject leaders keep a closer eye on the impact of teaching and marking on students' progress, especially in mathematics
 - reviewing the effectiveness of the actions taken to support students' increasing progress and to close gaps between disadvantaged students and the rest.

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

- Although a range of initiatives have been undertaken to improve teaching and raise achievement, these are not effective because they are not applied consistently well across the academy. Leaders do not check that teachers use the information they have about students' attainment and progress to challenge all groups, or set consistently high expectations for the quality of students' presentation and work. Students' academic targets, particularly in mathematics, are not challenging or clear enough to raise standards quickly.
- Leaders are developing more systematic checks on teaching and learning, but they are relatively new. Staff performance targets, linked to the national *Teachers' Standards* and the areas identified for improvement in the academy development plan, are beginning to have an impact. The academy's evaluation of its own work is accurate, but leaders have not fully evaluated the actions taken to bring about improvement. They review students' work regularly but not the quality of teachers' marking and do not check that teachers ensure students follow the good advice to improve their work.
- Leaders at all levels have not checked how well teachers build students' confidence and understanding of mathematical operations. Senior leaders are working to reduce the negative impact that staffing changes have had on students' attainment and progress in mathematics. The subject is currently led by a senior leader, and this has provided some stability and improvement.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make good progress across a wide range of subjects, including mathematics. The gap between these pupils and the rest is not reducing quickly enough. The pupil premium is used to provide access to residential activities, clubs, sports, cultural activities, as well as academic support for disadvantaged students. These enriching experiences allow eligible students to improve their social skills and study habits, and make better progress in their learning. However, leaders do not monitor support carefully enough to make sure it is effective.
- Students are welcomed whatever their background and they settle quickly into academy life. This is because leaders and staff work well together to care for and support students in developing basic skills and behaving thoughtfully. Leaders treat everyone equally and fairly. Discrimination is not tolerated. More recently, students have begun to receive helpful careers advice and many go on to further education and training in this school and other local colleges or employment.
- The Academies Enterprise Trust is providing effective support for leaders at all levels. Senior and subject leaders have a better understanding of how to observe lessons effectively and judge the quality of teaching. They are growing in their understanding of how to track students' progress accurately and use small groups and individual tuition to support learning. The interim principal and senior leaders also receive valuable support from governors, parents, staff and students. Clear, effective strategies are beginning to improve teaching and raise achievement, as seen in the improved 2014 English results.
- The academy is developing a broader range of academic and work-related courses for students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, which appeal to the interests and abilities of learners. Classroom learning is supplemented by clubs, activities, assemblies, visiting speakers and residential trips, such as the ski trip to Italy, or the student exchange trip to Germany. On 'Drop down days' the timetable is suspended and students participate in activities that raise their aspirations for the future and promote their spiritual moral, social and cultural development. They are prepared well for life in diverse modern British society.
- Leaders have effectively tackled inappropriate behaviour and reduced the high level of discrimination and bullying experienced by some students in the past. Students of all abilities are helped to get on together, and increasing proportions feel safe at the academy and have begun to make more effective progress.
- The reputation of the academy in the local community is improving and an increase in applicants for

places in Year 7 is testament to its growing popularity. Parents wrote to inspectors with praise for the recent improvements in the academy.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governors are committed to the academy. They hold high aspirations for students. Under the guidance and support of the Academies and Enterprises Trust and its regional lead for education, governors have a clearer idea of their roles and responsibilities.
- They receive good training in safeguarding, understanding progress and finance information. Governors monitor the quality of teaching, students' behaviour and academic progress against set targets. They provide an increasingly thoughtful level of challenge and support to the academy's leaders.
- Governors understand the academy's strengths and areas for development, which are linked to key areas of its development plan. They visit the academy regularly, and the information and reports provided by the interim principal help to keep them informed. Governors have not yet checked the effectiveness of the actions taken to raise standards and the quality of teaching.
- Governors understand the value of good teaching in raising achievement. Through the support of the Trust they manage the principal's performance closely. The principal's own targets are used suitably to determine those of other staff. The new staff appraisal system is not yet sufficiently embedded to drive improvement. Pay rises and promotions for teachers must be approved by the governing body, and teachers must meet their targets for good teaching and achievement to receive an increase in pay.
- Governors make sure the academy's safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet statutory requirements. All necessary checks are made on staff and child protection training for staff is up to date. They can account for the use of the pupil premium but have not checked sufficiently that it is effective in raising achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. This is the case in the main school and sixth form. They have positive attitudes to learning and their relationships with adults in the academy are harmonious. Students have a good understanding of right and wrong, and most behave in a mature, polite and courteous manner. They show consideration for others.
- In lessons where high expectations are set, students respond well and listen politely to teachers and each other, taking turns to make contributions to discussions. Students value the opportunities to serve the academy as house captain and council members. Even when work is less challenging, learning is rarely disrupted by inappropriate behaviour.
- Rewards are used effectively to motivate students to work hard and celebrate their effort and achievement. Students respond well. Year 7 students spoke highly of receiving merits. Year 11 students were keen on 'e-praise' rewards because these can be exchanged for donations to charity, or vouchers that they can spend at the shop and canteen.
- The academy provides good support for students who can display challenging behaviour. Good links with parents and external agencies, together with the full involvement of students in decision making, result in clear, workable support plans. Students are growing in their understanding of how to manage their own behaviour more effectively.
- Students enjoy coming to the academy. Attendance has risen to above the national average, and there has been a sharp reduction in fixed-term exclusions. Care is taken to record and report any unacceptable behaviour, and keep parents and carers informed. The academy monitors the attendance of all groups of students. The pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve the attendance of disadvantaged students. Punctuality to the academy and between lessons is good. Students move round the site sensibly.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. This includes the sixth form. The academy helps students to understand risk, including when using the internet. Parents receive helpful advice and support about how to keep their children safe when using the internet and social media websites.

- Students understand what cyber bullying is and know how to respond to it when it arises. They say they feel safe in the academy and spoke of the good improvements to behaviour and attitudes to learning. Inspectors found the academy to be safe.
- Students say that although there is some unpleasantness in the form of name-calling, they are confident that teachers will deal with it when it is reported. Rare incidents of a racist nature are reported and dealt with firmly. Parents expressed good support for the academy, and also recognised the significant improvements in behaviour and attitudes to learning.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers in the main school and sixth form do not use the information they have about students effectively to plan learning activities that challenge all abilities. As a result, some students are given work that is too hard or too easy. There is sometimes not enough support for the least able or challenge for the most able to support good progress.
- Many students struggle to grasp the basics in mathematics and this hinders their progress. Students are not clear about how to solve mathematical problems and complete calculations. They do not show their working out, or present their answers logically. Teachers do not insist that they do.
- Teachers do not use the academy's marking policy consistently well when they mark students' work. Comments do not clearly show students what they need to do to improve their work, and teachers do not check that students respond to these comments and make the necessary improvements.
- Regular meetings to check students' progress allow staff to identify those who are not progressing as well as expected. Support is provided through small group sessions, revision classes and one-to-one tuition to help students close gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Year 11 students welcome these opportunities. Some students make good progress as a result, but their effectiveness has not been fully evaluated.
- Teachers use a range of questioning techniques to probe students' understanding, generate reflection and draw out learning. Students show good engagement and respond with insight, enjoyment and enthusiasm, contributing thoughtful answers to class discussions, as seen in Year 7 lessons about *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth*.
- Reading is taught well. Students understand phonics, and apply their understanding well to reading and writing. The special classes in Years 7 to 9 enable students who struggle with reading and mathematics to catch up through an individual programme of support. Teaching assistants support these learners well. Students across the academy enjoy using the 'accelerated reader' programme, which is helping to build skills and confidence.
- Tutorial periods are used well to revisit literacy and numeracy and build skills and confidence in these subjects. This year, students in Year 11 were helped to make good progress in English and learning to write through effective use of resources. Literacy is taught effectively but disadvantaged students and those who have special educational needs do not progress as well others.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students join the academy with below-average attainment, and in 2014, Year 11 students left with below-average attainment in a broad range of GCSE subjects, including mathematics. While the quality of teaching has improved, it is not yet consistently good enough to speed up students' progress.
- Achievement in the sixth form is not good enough because the range of academic courses is limited. Students do well on work-related courses.
- In 2014, Year 11 students made good progress in English but did not make good progress in mathematics.

The academy's tracking information shows that students are now making better progress in mathematics. The vast majority of students are on track to make at least expected progress in both English and mathematics in 2015.

- The attainment of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium is below that of other students in the academy and nationally. In 2014, disadvantaged Year 11 students were, on average, one GCSE grade behind both in English and mathematics. Academy information shows that the progress currently made by eligible students is slower than that of other students. The gap in attainment between these students and their peers, in English and mathematics, is reducing slowly. Actions taken to improve their achievement are not fully evaluated to ensure that support for these students can be better directed.
- In 2014, a few of the most able students did not make good progress. Learning in the classroom does not always stretch and challenge these students to achieve their best. Where target setting and tracking are effective and supported by challenging learning activities in class, the most able make consistently good progress. Students are not entered early for GCSEs, so their potential to learn new skills is not limited.
- Some disabled students and those who have special educational needs did not make enough progress in 2014, particularly in mathematics. Progress is improving this year due to good support in academic mentoring, small-group sessions, revision classes and individual tuition.
- Year 7 'catch-up' funding is used well to address gaps in learning for students who join the academy with limited attainment in English and mathematics. This support, provided through special classes, aims to help them develop literacy and mathematical skills that are appropriate for their age. Academy information shows that the majority of students in Year 7 are on track to make good progress.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- The range of subjects available in the sixth form is too narrow to accommodate the interests and abilities of the students. Many do not continue into Year 13, and too many leave partway through their studies.
- The quality of teaching is improving. Some good teaching, particularly in the motor vehicle and construction courses, leads to impressive results. Students achieved a 100% pass rate at Level 1 and Level 2 in these subjects. Students have the opportunity to re-sit GCSE English and mathematics or study for the functional skills equivalent examinations.
- The behaviour and safety of students are good. Students attend well and participate in the life of the academy. Students have access to impartial careers advice but this has not helped to raise aspirations and ensure that all are in employment, training or work when they leave the academy. Very few students progress to university.
- Leadership and management require improvement. While some students achieve well, particularly in the motor mechanics and construction, students do not achieve well in academic subjects. This limits their opportunity to progress to university. The academy aims to offer a broader range of subjects and widen its links with other post-16 providers. A more robust application process is helping to ensure that students are better matched to their courses.

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	139055
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	447842

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	577
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	103
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Julie Taylor
Principal (Interim)	Mark Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01507 606555
Fax number	01507 607399
Email address	contactus@cordeauxacademy.org

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