

Sir Thomas Wharton Community College A Co-operative Academy

Tait Avenue, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN12 1HH

Inspection dates 20–21 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Since the opening of the academy, students have underachieved across a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching over time is inadequate. Expectations are too low and the work set for students does not match their needs.
- The quality of support received by students with disabilities and those with special educational needs is not checked well enough and leads to their underachievement.
- The use of additional government funding to help disadvantaged students has been ineffective. Consequently, the achievement of these students is inadequate.
- The curriculum has failed to meet the needs of students. Skills in reading, writing and mathematics have not been developed well enough and have impeded students' progress across different subjects.
- Students' behaviour requires improvement; it is not managed consistently well enough. The attitudes of the students vary depending on the quality of teaching they receive.
- The quality of teaching, students' work and the adherence to academy policies have not, over time, been checked well enough by subject leaders to ensure students are achieving well.
- Plans for improvement, including at subject leader level, do not always enable leaders to determine clearly enough whether the impact of actions taken has been successful in improving the quality of teaching and students' progress.
- The effectiveness of the sixth form requires improvement. The quality of teaching is not consistently good and leads to variable achievement across subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The new leadership is tackling weak teaching and holding subject leaders to account. As a result, teaching and achievement are improving.
- Sixth form students make a good contribution to academy life. They are good role models for others and support younger students in lessons and form time.
- The new headteacher and present governing body have a clear understanding of the academy's strengths and how to tackle its weaknesses.
- Procedures to ensure the safety of students are good. Students say they feel safe in the academy.
- The academy is preparing students well for life in modern Britain.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons. Four observations were undertaken jointly with leaders from the academy.
- Inspectors spoke with three groups of students about their learning in lessons and their safety in the academy. An inspector also listened to some students reading.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors. Meetings were held with academy staff, including middle and senior leaders. A meeting was held with five educational partners working with the academy.
- Inspectors also looked at the academy’s review of its own performance, its development plan, academy policies and the minutes of the governing body meetings. Inspectors also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work in lessons and analysed samples of students’ books.
- The 41 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were evaluated.
- There were also 53 questionnaires completed by staff which were analysed by inspectors.

Inspection team

James McGrath, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Judith Gooding	Additional Inspector
Anthony Billings	Additional Inspector
Adam Ryder	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- The academy is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, those supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of students are White British. There are very few students who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is average.
- There is one alternative provider of education used by the academy; the Therapeutic Learning Centre (TLC).
- Sir Thomas Wharton Community College A Co-operative Academy converted to become an academy on 1 February 2013. When its predecessor school, Sir Thomas Wharton Community College was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- The academy has its own vocational centre, the Edlington Hill Top Centre, based half a mile from the main site of the academy.
- The academy holds the Arts Mark Gold award and the National Standard for Enterprise Education.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The new headteacher took up post on 1 September 2014.
- There have been significant changes in leadership and in teaching staff since the opening of the academy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the achievement of all groups of students and the quality of teaching so both are consistently good or better, by making sure that:
 - there are high expectations of what all students can achieve
 - work set matches the needs and abilities of all groups of students, particularly for those who are disadvantaged, those with disabilities and those with special educational needs
 - students' understanding of what they are learning is checked meticulously through skilful questioning
 - clear subject guidance is given when marking students' work so they know what to do to improve
 - students act on the advice given in marking to improve their progress and develop their attitudes to learning
 - students' behaviour is managed consistently well in the classroom
 - reading, writing and mathematical skills are developed effectively across the academy
 - extra support for students is managed more effectively to ensure that students make good progress.
- Improve the impact of leaders, managers and governors by acting swiftly to ensure that:
 - they rapidly improve the quality of teaching and achievement in underperforming subjects so these subjects are consistently good or better and there is no inadequate teaching in the academy
 - all subject leaders consistently and rigorously check the quality of teaching and students' learning in order to make sure that students are making at least good progress
 - planned actions, including in subject leaders' plans, are checked regularly against clear targets that relate to students' progress, in order to determine how well the actions are contributing to improvements in teaching and learning
 - the additional government funding to support disadvantaged students is used effectively to raise achievement.

An external review of governance 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

- Until recently, subject leaders have not taken into account a wide range of evidence to determine whether students are making effective progress. Nor have they checked on whether the application of academy policies for learning and behaviour are consistently applied. Their plans for improvement do not clearly identify how actions are intended to impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Senior leaders and governors have not always held them accountable for these responsibilities with sufficient rigour. As a result, the quality of teaching and students' achievement are inadequate.
- The new headteacher and the governing body have a very clear understanding of the performance of the academy and a very clear view of how successful it can be. They have identified what needs to be done to improve achievement and secured the support of all the staff to drive their ambitions forward; all staff said they know what they are trying to achieve as an academy. Staff are keen to ensure the plans for improvement are driven forward successfully.
- A more rigorous system for checking the quality of teaching and student achievement has been introduced by the new headteacher. He is ensuring there is strong challenge to all levels of leadership to do better. Senior leaders are supporting subject leaders with that challenge to ensure teaching and achievement are improving, though, at this early stage, both are still inconsistent.
- Systems to check the performance of teachers and hold them to account for the performance of their students are now more robust. Training for teachers on setting work to meet the needs of all groups of students has been started and as a result, teaching is beginning to help students make better progress. Appropriate action is taken when teaching falls short of what is expected.
- Over time, leaders and governors have not used the pupil premium funding effectively for disadvantaged students. Systems to identify the achievements of these students have improved recently and academy information indicates better achievement for these students. While leadership fosters good relations and is tackling discrimination, there is much to do to ensure equality of opportunity for all groups of students.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of courses, clubs and activities for students. The high-quality provision in the art department is reflected in the rich display of art work around the school. Students are given good guidance in choosing appropriate courses to follow at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
- Students study careers education and guidance, from Year 8 to Year 13, and benefit from links with the local Chamber of Commerce. This supports the school's commitment to business and enterprise education and students' employability.
- Over time, however, the curriculum has been ineffective in developing reading, writing and mathematical skills to ensure that all students achieve well. The new headteacher has made immediate change to the curriculum to support the development of these skills more effectively and improvements were seen in the quality of writing. Systems for developing reading and mathematical skills across a range of subjects have been less effective.
- The academy is contributing well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students study other faiths and religions and have good opportunities to extend their understanding of other cultures. Through the promotion of 'co-operative values' and a personal, social, health and citizenship programme, students are well aware of democracy, the rights of others and life in modern Britain.
- The academy and the local authority have recently started to work together to secure school improvement. Nevertheless the headteacher has swiftly assessed the needs of the academy and has carefully chosen to link with an outstanding academy and a National Leader of Education to support the drive for improvement. Subject reviews have been completed by outstanding schools to check that plans are having an appropriate impact on student learning and the quality of teaching. Staff confirm that this work is helping to secure improvements in the quality of teaching and leadership.
- A bespoke training programme and support is in place for newly qualified teachers or Teach First trainees and they are making secure progress in the development of their teaching skills. .
- Leaders and managers meticulously check the behaviour and safety of those students at alternative provision or the academy's vocational off-site provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Over time, governors have not held the academy to account sufficiently well to ensure good teaching and achievement. There have been changes, over the past year, in governance which has led to greater

challenge and support for the headteacher. Governors are more aware of the quality of teaching than in the past and are challenging heads of departments to ensure that teaching and achievement are improving. They are increasingly more robust in linking together teacher performance and pay enhancement. They understand the academic achievement of the academy in comparison to schools nationally. Governors have appointed a consultant to support them in challenging and supporting the headteacher.

- Governors know how the pupil premium funding is used but, over time they have failed to ensure that it is used effectively to prevent disadvantaged students from underachieving. They have commissioned a review of this spending. This took place recently and the governors are awaiting a report. They have organised a provisional action plan to improve the impact of the funding. They have a clear understanding of the academy's finances. Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and are effective. Governors make appropriate checks on the academy's work in this respect. .

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Students' attitudes to learning vary according to the quality of teaching they receive. They do not respond well enough to comments to improve their work and this limits their progress. Teachers can be too tolerant of variable attitudes. Therefore, there are occasions when students do not make sufficient contribution to their learning and this is not always managed well by teachers.
- Students are beginning to take a pride in the presentation of their work. The new headteacher has established guidelines for teachers and this is supporting students' good presentation. Students cooperate well with each other and are keen to help each other with their work in class.
- Students are proud of the academy. They welcome visitors and enjoy telling them about the things they do in the academy. Around the academy, students treat each other with dignity and respect moving sensibly and safely between lessons. They are courteous and polite and are confident when speaking to adults.
- Academy systems to check attendance and punctuality are strong. As a result, attendance has been improving and is above average. There are a clear set of rules and students understand them well. This, combined with effective systems, has assisted in reducing exclusions to below average.
- Students in the sixth form are good role models and take responsibility to supervise younger students at lunchtime, support them with their work through mentoring and provide help in lessons as well as leading academy assemblies. They are well respected by other students.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. It ensures students are aware of how to keep themselves safe. There are opportunities in assemblies, form time and lessons for students to learn about safety, including, for example, how to use the internet safely.
- Students are clear about what constitutes bullying, including prejudice-based bullying and cyber-bullying. Bullying is uncommon but when it happens students are confident that it is dealt with immediately and effectively.
- Students are clear that the academy teaches them well about equality, equity and self-responsibility, as these are some of the 'cooperative values' on which the academy focuses.
- Adults are well trained to support students' safety. They are vigilant in checking whether students are in need of support. The academy works well with other agencies and has its own strong, meticulous systems to ensure the safety of all students including those who are vulnerable.
- The academy uses alternative provision appropriately for a very small number of students. There are well-developed links and procedures with providers of off-site courses to ensure students are safe. The development of the academy's own vocational provision has improved attendance and supported reductions in exclusions which make a good contribution to safety and behaviour.
- All students who spoke to inspectors said they were safe in the academy. Many said that was because they were well cared for by the teachers and other adults in the academy. Parents and staff share the same positive views about students' safety.

The quality of teaching**is inadequate**

- Teaching over time has been weak and too variable in quality; consequently this has led to students underachieving and making inadequate progress over time. Significant changes in staffing have occurred recently. Inspectors found that the sustained efforts of the new headteacher and other senior leaders were supporting improvements in the quality of teaching. However, the quality of teaching is still too variable.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough. Too often, work set is easy and does not enable students to progress well. Students' starting points are not assessed, nor used well enough, to ensure that work is challenging and meets the needs of students. Expectations of disabled students, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged students are frequently too low.
- Questioning is not always used skilfully by teachers to involve students in their learning. Often it is not used well enough to assess what students understand. Too often it does not seek out students' knowledge and deepen their understanding. As a result, students do not engage well enough with their learning to make good progress.
- An analysis of students' books showed that work is usually marked regularly with additional comments for improvement. However, subject-specific suggestions for improvement are provided infrequently and are not precise enough for students to understand how to make their work better. As a result, they do not adjust their work effectively to ensure they make improvements that are necessary to support stronger progress. When feedback from teachers is clear, students do not always respond regularly to the comments given for improvement and teachers do not insist they do so. This slows students' progress.
- Reading is not promoted well throughout the academy. There are too few opportunities for students to read in lessons other than English. Reading in form time is not developing students' skills effectively. Writing skills are improving as the headteacher has set clear guidance for the development of writing across the academy. However, there is still variable quality in writing due to inconsistent application of the academy's policy. There are too few opportunities for students to use mathematical skills in other subjects. This limits students' understanding of mathematics and impedes their progress in subjects where mathematics should be used regularly.
- Behaviour is not managed consistently well, there are occasions when teachers are too tolerant of the few students who occasionally misbehave in class. On these occasions, learning slows. There are occasions when students' behaviour slips because work is too easy and they lose concentration.
- Teaching assistants support students well outside the classroom for small group reading sessions. In class, teaching assistants are well informed by teachers about what students are to learn. However, the work of teaching assistants is not checked well enough to ensure that the support they are giving is helping students to make good progress in class; particularly when they are working with disabled students and those with special educational needs.
- The headteacher and other leaders have focused strongly on improving the quality of teaching. Examples of high-quality marking with good student response were seen, particularly in business studies; increasing challenge was seen in mathematics; interesting work pitched at the right level with high quality questioning was seen in history and this supported students' strong achievement and engagement. These examples are testament to the academy's capacity for further improvement.

The achievement of pupils**is inadequate**

- Since the opening of the academy, weak teaching has led to students' achievement being inadequate. In particular, students have underachieved in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and geography.
- As a result of weak progress, students do not attain as well as they should. In 2014, the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE grades between A* to C, including English and mathematics, at the end of Year 11 was exceptionally low. Generally, students attain well in art and in business studies but there are a considerable number of subjects where they underachieve.
- Teachers are not sufficiently skilled to meet the needs of disabled students or those with special educational needs and have low expectations of them. Also, additional support for these students has not been effectively deployed. As a result, the progress these students make is inadequate and they make even slower progress than other students. Recently, leadership has readjusted the deployment of staff and there are signs of improving progress but not enough to ensure that these students are making as much progress as they should.

- Over time, disadvantaged students make much less progress than non-disadvantaged students in the academy and nationally. This is because of the academy's ineffective use of the additional government funding available to support these students. At the end of Year 11 in 2014, disadvantaged students were on average between one and one and a half GCSE grades behind non-disadvantaged students in the academy in English and mathematics. In comparison to non-disadvantaged students nationally they are over one and a half GCSE grades behind in both English and in mathematics.
- The most able students, as with others in the academy, make inadequate progress. They are not challenged well enough by the work that is set for them to reach the highest GCSE grades.
- Information provided by the academy shows that achievement is set to improve for all groups of students in the present Year 11. Overall, more students are forecast to make the progress expected of them and standards are set to be broadly average. An analysis of students' work, completed by inspectors, showed that students in Year 11 seemed to be making the progress expected of them but no more than that. The new headteacher is driving this improvement by challenging subject leaders and other leaders to do better. As a result, leaders are now checking students' work more regularly and are supporting students who are falling behind more swiftly than in the past.
- Inspectors checked students' work across the academy and found that there are wide variations in achievement between subjects and within subjects. This is due to considerable variation in the quality of teaching. However, presentation is improving and the quality of writing is focused on by all teachers in the academy.
- The academy is using early entry to GCSE English Literature for the first time this year. It is not possible to ascertain its effectiveness as there are no results available. The academy does not use early entry to GCSE for any other subjects.
- The academy's provision for vocational courses, including via alternative provision, has assisted in improving students' engagement in learning through improved attendance and behaviour. All of these students move into employment, education or training. Students do well in applied science courses at the centre. Their attainment in English and mathematics is improving but their overall progress is similar to others in the academy.
- Year 7 catch-up funding (government funding for those entering secondary school with below average standards in English and mathematics) is helping younger students to make effective progress in developing their literacy and mathematical skills through the provision of additional time and individual support.
- The academy provides students with a reading session in form time, once a week, a visit to the academy library once a fortnight and where needed, some good reading support from skilled teaching assistants. However, students are not being listened to often enough to improve their reading and to develop an enjoyment of reading. Also, there are too few opportunities for students to read regularly in subjects other than English in order to further develop their reading skills.

Sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Over time, students' progress is not consistent across subjects and as a result, requires improvement. Variations in progress reflect the inconsistency in teaching quality and prevent good achievement overall.
- Those students re-sitting GCSE English and mathematics generally start with low levels of prior attainment. Hence, the proportions reaching a GCSE grade C or better are below average. The academy has recognised that these students need more time to succeed and from September 2014 it has provided more lessons and smaller classes to help these students to improve their grades.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is better than in the main school and this is why achievement is slightly better. However, teaching is not consistently good and requires improvement. In particular, teaching is not always challenging enough for the most able students. Also, feedback to students and work seen is of variable quality. Therefore, teaching requires improvement.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of opportunities for students for all levels of abilities. This allows students to join the sixth form and take foundation courses for a year so they are adequately prepared to take more academic courses at a later stage. Links with local universities help to guarantee future places in higher education for students starting with a wide range of ability. These arrangements illustrate the way that the academy is dedicated to serving the needs of the local community.
- In the sixth form, there are very few disabled students or students with special educational needs. Comparisons between the progress of these students with others in the sixth form is not statistically valid. The few disadvantaged students in the sixth form make the same progress as other students, although

overall, they attain less well than others due to their lower starting points.

- Sixth form students play an important role in the life of the academy. The academy expects them to make a strong contribution. They behave well and act as positive role models and support younger students with learning through coaching and mentoring. They exhibit positive and mature attitudes and show great respect towards other students and to adults. Students say they are safe and 'enjoy coming to the academy every day'.
- Leadership, including that of subject leaders, has not yet resolved inconsistencies in progress between subjects or ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good. Hence, leadership of the sixth form requires improvement. Recent changes to checking the quality of teaching more robustly and the achievement of students indicates that there is good capacity for further improvement.
- The academy provides strong advice and guidance for students. It enables those entering the sixth form to be placed on appropriate courses that match their abilities and aspirations. Information, advice and guidance supports students well and prepares them to go on to further and higher education or training and employment.

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	139301
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	447888

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	992
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kim Gray
Headteacher	Keith Binks
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2011
Telephone number	01709 864100
Fax number	01709 864175
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