

Beamont Collegiate

Long Lane, Warrington, Cheshire, WA2 8PX

Inspection dates

24–25 February 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Not enough students achieve five GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged students attain and achieve less well than their peers.
- In a minority of lessons, students are not always given work that is sufficiently challenging.
- The marking of internal tests and assessment papers or tasks does not always enable students to understand the next steps that will help them to improve further and faster.

The school has the following strengths

- The academy is led exceptionally well by a Principal with an eagle eye for improvement and instilling high aspirations for both students and staff.
- The robust leadership of the Principal and his senior and middle leaders gives strong capacity for the academy to make further and more rapid improvement.
- Staff and students have wholly bought into the Principal's drive for high aspirations and rapid improvement in academy performance.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and self-critical.
- Students make better than expected progress in science.
- There is a critical mass of good teaching across the curriculum. Staff training is well focused and of high quality.
- Student behaviour is good. They are eager to learn and are increasingly embracing a stronger work ethos.
- The academy represents a safe and caring community.
- Governance is good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of subjects taught across the academy to different age groups. Several lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors looked closely at samples of students’ written work across a range of subjects and year groups. They also watched behaviour around the academy.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, groups of teachers and three groups of students. Inspectors met with the Chair of the Governing Body, the governor responsible for achievement and attainment scrutiny, and a representative of the academy sponsor. Inspectors also met with two groups of students and a group of teachers to discuss marking and assessment practice.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including: self-evaluation and development plans; data relating to students’ attainment and progress; information on attendance; documents and records about behaviour and safeguarding; records of the monitoring of teaching and learning and of performance management and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed the 17 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) alongside the school’s own records of parental and student feedback. They also took account of 41 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty’s Inspector

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Her Majesty’s Inspector

David Woodhouse

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Full report

Information about this school

- The Beamont Collegiate Academy opened in April 2013 under the sponsorship of the Warrington Collegiate Education Trust.
- The current Principal took up post in September 2013. Since its inception there have been significant changes at governor, senior and middle management levels and in the composition of the teaching staff.
- Beamont Collegiate Academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above the national 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 proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- In 2013/14, the academy did not meet the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy does not enter students for GCSE examinations earlier than the usual time.
- At the time of the inspection, the academy offered alternative provision for seven students with Cornerstones Warrington, Grappenhall Hall School, Warrington Wolves, Cheshire Fire Services and the Relationship Centre, Warrington.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching that requires improvement so that it is good and increase the amount of outstanding teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
 - develop the use of their questioning skills so that all students have opportunities to develop their reasoning, spoken language and extend their thinking
 - plan lessons using assessment information that will support and challenge all students.
- Improve teachers' marking of all internal tests and assignment papers or tasks by:
 - making specific comments so that students learn from their mistakes and understand their next steps in learning and examination preparation
 - adopting some of the excellent marking practice in student exercise books that enables a highly productive dialogue with students on improvement.
- Improve the attainment and progress that disadvantaged students make and increase more rapidly the percentage of all students achieving five GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The academy has undergone rapid change during the last 18 months. Staff turnover has been significant. A new senior leadership team is in place. A more productive climate for learning has been established and expectations for both students and staff raised. Leaders, managers and governors are working hard to overcome a poor legacy of learning and low expectations. Historic underperformance is not reflective of current endeavours and attitudes. Change has been rapid but is substantive. An ethos of 'high expectations, no excuses' has been entrenched.
- The new Principal leads with a passion for and a razor-sharp focus on improvement. Senior leaders communicate strongly an aspirational culture and lead their individual areas of responsibilities very well. Staff and students have fully bought into this rapid agenda for change.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and realistic. There is a strong recognition of the academy's need for further and accelerated improvement. Areas for improvement are identified and actions taken to tackle them. The use of data at all levels is comprehensive and well focused. The tracking and monitoring of student progress is thorough and informs learning activities. Target setting is effective, well used and understood by students.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is good. Leaders ensure that new teachers, staff new to the academy and established practitioners have good training and developmental opportunities. A strong culture is emerging within the staff of sharing best practice and discussing the ways and means to improve teaching and learning.
- Subject leaders are effective in driving improvements within their areas of responsibility. They work well together as a team and have embraced greater accountability and responsibility.
- The curriculum has developed to meet the needs of all students more effectively. Students choose from a range of academic and vocational subjects at Key Stage 4. STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) pathways have been developed well within the academy and with local further education providers and local businesses. Alternative educational provision is well focused and meets the learning needs of a small group of students. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is focused on closing gaps in literacy and numeracy and building the confidence and oracy skills of students.
- The academy has raised students' aspirations with regard to the importance of future employment and its impact on life skills and lifestyles. Students expressed growing ambitions to progress in education and training.
- The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is integral to the academy's values. Assemblies, personal, social and health education and events cover such aspects as radicalisation, e-safety, child sexual exploitation and safety, and the nature and responsibilities of citizenship within a democratic society.
- Leaders are making effective use of pupil premium funding. Tracking the progress of disadvantaged students and providing opportunities for them to improve their skills and learning experiences are thorough. Leaders acknowledge the need to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers more rapidly.
- Performance management is very robust. High levels of accountability are balanced by quality developmental and coaching support. School appraisal systems are very thorough. There is a well-defined relationship between teacher appraisal and the performance of students.
- Academy links with the local community are developing quickly. Strong partnerships with primary schools have been forged. Links with local business are benefiting the breadth of the curriculum. The academy welcomes external critical evaluation of its work. Parents are kept well informed on the progress of their sons or daughters.
- The academy has maintained an effective working relationship with the local authority. The Warrington Collegiate Education Trust plays a key role in supporting the academy through its programme of improvement and culture change.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements. Staff and governors receive suitable safeguarding training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear view of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. They have a good understanding of achievement and attainment data, and robustly challenge senior leadership on performance.
 - Governors are highly supportive of the Principal's drive for sustained and embedded improvement.

Governors understand the effectiveness of teaching within the academy and its impact on students' achievement. They monitor academy performance management well.

- Governors have good oversight of the academy's finances, including how pupil premium funding is used and the impact this is having on the achievement of disadvantaged students.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students have played an integral part in the transformed culture of the academy.
- Students behave well in lessons; they are pleasant and polite. They take pride in their academy uniform and in the academy environment.
- Students have a good developing sense of civic responsibility. The academy offers an increasing number of opportunities for older students to develop their leadership skills. Students undertake a variety of responsibilities, including those as prefects and reading peer mentors for younger students. Students also play an active role in assemblies and in training on safeguarding and citizenship.
- Students want to learn. They attend in large numbers revision sessions in the evenings and on Saturday mornings. A growing array of extra-curricular activities informs their wider educational and cultural vision. Cultural activities are now being added to an historically strong participation in sport. The growth of student participation in debating events and reading clubs gives further evidence to the radical change of culture that has embraced the academy.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good, including when they attend the alternative provision.
- Students feel safe and secure in lessons and around the academy. On the rare occasions when students experience bullying they say it is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. They are aware of the different forms bullying can take, including racist and cyber-bullying. They are tolerant of others' sexuality, background and religious beliefs.
- The change in students' attitudes is exemplified in higher attendance rates and a significant decrease in exclusions. They now attend regularly and in line with those rates seen nationally.
- Inspection evidence supports the view of the majority of parents who responded to the Parent View online survey that their sons and daughters feel safe and well cared for by the academy.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of learning and students' application to learning has improved significantly at the academy. Teaching and learning require improvement because there remain some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Students are more eager to learn when activities offer appropriate levels of challenge. Students are given the opportunities to develop their skills and deepen their understanding; they respond with energy, excitement and strong commitment. In these instances, high expectations and aspirations are promoted and teachers have a sharp focus on the progress they expect students to make. Debate and group work are well planned to enable students to discuss, develop and advance arguments that stretch their knowledge and understanding. Well-planned and engaging learning activities characterise lessons at Key Stage 3.
- Where activities do not offer appropriate levels of challenge, the questioning of students and their responses are too shallow and fail to promote a deeper understanding and extend thinking. Too often students do not make sufficient progress because their aspirations are low and the teachers' expectations for them are limited. In these instances, students' behaviour for learning is not yet generally good because they do not always take responsibility for their own learning. Too often they are seen to be overly reliant on their teachers and less reliant on themselves to ask questions or explore problems and contexts more thoroughly.
- Student exercise books are marked frequently. The best marking gives very clear and specific guidance on how to improve. Students give extended responses with examples as to how they have used teachers' comments to enable improvement. Students said that they find this dialogue very useful in helping them to make better progress and deepen their understanding. In internal tests and assessment papers or tasks

seen by inspectors, marking was not as specific and useful as in exercise books.

- The academy places a high priority on improving the literacy, numeracy and oracy skills of students. Reading ages in Years 7 and 8 have improved significantly; however, a wider culture of 'reading for pleasure' has not yet been comprehensively embedded. The academy is widening opportunities for students to develop oracy and debating skills in lessons and extra-curricular activities.
- Relationships between teachers and students are good. Students spoken to during the inspection reflected on the high regard they held their teachers in and their appreciation for the 'extra mile' most go to in order for them to be successful.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The academy has been challenged by a historic legacy of poor learning and examination results. Students enter the academy with prior attainment significantly lower than that seen nationally. The current achievement of students requires improvement because, although attainment and progress are now improving quickly, not all students are performing as well as they should.
- The academy has one full year set of GCSE examination data since its inception. In 2013/14, the attainment of five GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics was well below the national average. Mathematics results improved significantly. GCSE English results were below the national average. Students performed very well in science and in line with the national averages in humanities.
- In 2013/14, Year 11 disadvantaged students left school approximately three-quarters of a GCSE grade behind in mathematics and English when their performance is compared to their peers nationally. The in-school gap with other students was also at approximately three-quarters of a GCSE grade for GCSE in mathematics and English. Girls significantly outperformed boys.
- The most-able students made progress in line with expectations.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs in 2013/14 was behind other students in the academy and their peers nationally. Currently, more focused strategies, an enhanced curriculum and better additional support are improving the attainment and progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Inspectors' observations of the quality of learning and scrutiny of work in students' books indicate that students' achievement is improving across the academy more rapidly. Current academy data on progress at Key Stage 4 indicate that students are making better progress in both English and mathematics as well as across a broad range of subjects. Students in Key Stage 3 are at least making expected progress and an increasing number better than expected progress.
- Academy data and inspection evidence indicate that strategies to close gaps more rapidly between disadvantaged students and their peers are now impacting at both key stages. Boys are now making significantly better progress.
- The most-able students are now making better progress. Academy leaders are working on strategies to add further challenge and extension activities to Key Stage 4 work to reflect the progress made with the most-able students at Key Stage 3.
- Year 7 students who join the 'catch-up' programme are making better progress in their literacy because of the additional support they receive. Reading ages show a significant improvement in Years 7 and 8.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 are educated in off-site alternative provision at a small number of venues. This provision is effectively monitored and current academy data indicate that students are making expected progress.
- The increased rigour with which students' progress is tracked is resulting in all students having a better chance to succeed. Senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers record and evaluate the progress of students exceptionally well through the academy's dedicated progress data room.
- From the 2013/14 cohort, all students progressed into education, employment or training. Students are well prepared for the next step in education or 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	139196
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	449795

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	767
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr H Platt
Principal	Mr A Moorcroft
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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