

New Charter Academy

Broadoak Road, Ashton-Under-Lyne, OL6 8RF

Inspection dates

25-26 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching is not consistently good or better.
- A minority of students do not make enough progress during their time at the academy. As a result, they do not gain the GCSE results of which they are capable. This has been particularly marked in mathematics.
- The academy does not always respond swiftly enough when students are falling behind in their work, so they are at risk of not gaining the grades they should.
- A gap remains between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students, particularly in mathematics.
- Not enough is expected of a minority of students, so that they do not make the progress they should or always behave well in lessons.
- Behaviour requires improvement. There are times when students misbehave in lessons because the work they are given is too hard for some or too easy for others. Sometimes, they do not understand what they have to do or the purpose of the work.
- Students do not always take sufficient care with handwriting and with the presentation of their work.
- The marking of students' work does not always include enough detail. Consequently, students do not know how to improve it or do not always respond to the advice given.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders and the governing body have a clear understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. They have used this information and acted decisively to secure improvements since the previous inspection.
- This has resulted in some good teaching and achievement, for example in English. It has also increased the rate of progress for the most able students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Subject leaders are driving improvements in their subjects. This has been particularly effective in English. All subject leaders, including those newer to the role, are working with determination to make further improvement.
- Work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students move around the building sensibly. They are safe and say that they feel safe in the academy.
- Provision in the sixth form is good. Its students make a strong contribution to the life of the academy and are prepared well for the future. The numbers in the sixth form are growing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 52 lessons. They observed other activities for shorter periods of time. Three lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also looked at work in students' books.
- The inspectors met with groups of staff and with four groups of students. They spoke to students informally at different times of the academy day.
- They also met with four representatives of the governing body and with the director of academy improvement for the academy trust.
- The inspectors took into account the 51 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors observed the academy's work. They looked at information about students' progress, documents relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding, the academy's checks on the quality of teaching, its analysis of how well it is doing and its plans for further improvement.

Inspection team

Liz Godman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter McKay	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector
Claire Hollister	Additional Inspector
Paul Rafferty	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is much larger than most secondary schools.
- In 2014, the academy met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- About half of the academy's students are disadvantaged. This proportion is much higher than average in comparison with other schools. These are students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority who are supported by pupil premium funding.
- A majority of students are of White British heritage. Other students come from a wide variety of different heritage backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is higher than that found in most schools.
- A small number of students attend courses designed to develop their basic skills at Tameside College.
- The academy is sponsored by a housing association, the New Charter Group and is the original academy in the Great Academy Education Trust. The Trust now includes Silver Springs Primary Academy and Copley Academy.
- The sixth form has links with Manchester High School for Girls.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to at least good in all subjects by:
 - making sure that all teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve and of how they should behave in lessons
 - ensuring that all students' work is marked clearly and in detail so that students know what they need to do to improve their work and by making sure that students consistently respond to the advice they are given
 - using the examples of highly effective teaching more widely to provide a model for all staff
 - securing the role of all subject leaders in developing teaching within and between subjects.
- Raise students' attainment and increase the rate of progress of all students by:
 - taking swift action when students' attainment starts to fall below that of which they are capable
 - further increasing the attainment and rate of progress of disadvantaged students, particularly in mathematics
 - making sure that all students take care with handwriting and in presentation of their work in all subjects.
- Improve students' behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons by making sure that:
 - they are given work which is neither too hard nor too easy
 - the work they are given captures their interest and they understand its purpose.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The principal, senior leaders and governors have tackled weak teaching and students' underachievement rigorously since the previous inspection. This has secured improvements, most markedly in English.
- Improvements in the leadership of teaching have also secured examples of exemplary teaching in most subjects, including mathematics. However, teaching overall still requires improvement and students do not make consistently good progress in every class in the different subjects.
- Middle and subject leaders know what needs to be done and are determined to bring about changes, actively seeking advice on how best to achieve this. Some subject leaders are newly in post, so have not had time to secure consistently good teaching and achievement in their subject areas.
- Detailed and regular checks ensure that senior leaders and governors have a highly accurate view of the academy's strengths and areas for development. This information has been used well to make improvements to date.
- The performance of staff is managed robustly. There is a good programme of continuing professional development according to the academy's needs. This is helping to secure improvements in teaching.
- The trust and the governing body provide good support to the academy's leaders and bring considerable expertise in financial, human resource and educational matters.
- Academy leaders have ensured that students' reading and communication skills are developed well in different subjects, with a strong emphasis on the use of individual subjects' technical vocabulary. However, students' writing skills, handwriting and presentation are not given the same emphasis in the different subjects as they are in English lessons and students do not always take sufficient care in their work.
- After the previous inspection, the academy developed an effective plan to raise the achievement of disadvantaged students. The progress and impact of the plan are checked on regularly and adjustments made to further improve the achievement of these students. However some gaps in attainment and progress between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students remain, most markedly in mathematics.
- The academy's courses and activities help to prepare students well for the future. As a result in 2014, almost all students who left Year 11 went on to further education, training or employment. Good leadership in the sixth form is helping students to gain and take up places at university.
- The academy promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. A good range of visits and clubs broadens their understanding of life in modern Britain. Younger students said that they enjoy learning about politics and concepts such as democracy through the experiences the academy provides.
- Students comment that everyone from a variety of different backgrounds gets on well together. Older students take their duties in helping others very seriously. Students of all ages eagerly help their disabled classmates to get around the building safely. These exemplify the academy's good work in challenging discrimination and fostering good relations.
- However, the academy's work on promoting equality of opportunity is not yet as good as it could be because the achievement of some students, including some who are disadvantaged, still requires improvement.
- The academy works well with parents, seeking to involve them in a variety of different events celebrating students' successes and keeping them informed about their children's progress.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding students meet current requirements. Training and guidance for staff are up to date. This helps to ensure that arrangements are secure and understood by all staff. Leaders monitor the attendance and behaviour of students following courses away from the academy's site effectively.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Representatives of the governing body and of the trust have a highly accurate view of the quality of teaching and of the data in relation to students' achievement. Their strong expertise in education and in wider finance and human resource matters has contributed greatly to improvements in the academy's work since the previous inspection.
 - Governors visit the academy regularly and minutes of their meetings show a high level of challenge to senior leaders in relation to academy improvement. The governors have a strong track record of involvement and understanding of the management of the performance of staff, in ensuring that only good teaching is rewarded, and in supporting leaders in dealing with any poor performance of staff.
 - They keep a close check on the achievement of disadvantaged students and hold the academy to

account as to how the pupil premium is used. They know that this aspect of the academy's work has improved, but that continued improvement is necessary.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. This is because a minority of students misbehave in some lessons, for example by playing with the equipment or using unacceptable language.
- Sometimes, students lose interest in the lesson because they do not understand its purpose or what they are being asked to do. Occasionally, students lack the confidence to tackle the work because they find it too hard. Consequently they stop working or behave badly, causing disruption to the learning of others who are attempting the task.
- On a few occasions, students do not have enough work to do or the tasks are repetitive and lack challenge so that they become bored and their interest is lost.
- Students' responses in other lessons show that they can rise to a challenge, behave sensibly and are eager to take on harder work. In these instances, students work together well, complete a large amount of work and show a high degree of respect for staff and for one another.
- Students' work in English shows pride and care with good handwriting and presentation. However, this is not replicated in every subject where handwriting and layout of work are untidy and students draw or scribble on or in their books.
- Students' behaviour around the academy shows that almost all can and do behave responsibly and sensibly, for example when queuing for meals or when going up and down stairs between lessons.
- Students also show respect for the academy building and keep it in good condition. They take pride in their uniforms and in the badges they have gained for different responsibilities and achievements.
- The academy's reduced use of exclusions and 'call-outs' from lessons illustrates the improvements for students with particular behavioural needs.
- Good attendance has been maintained and is slightly above the national average for secondary schools.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students say that they feel safe in the academy and that bullying is rare. A small number of students commented to the inspectors that they have been bullied in the past, but that when they told a member of staff about it, it stopped.
- Students take good care of one another. The academy's arrangements for movement between lessons promote the safety of disabled students who leave lessons a little earlier than others and are accompanied by another student. This helps them to avoid the very busy and congested areas at lesson changeovers.
- Almost all parents who responded to the online questionnaire agree that their children feel safe in school.
- Students show a good understanding of how to stay safe because a wide range of topics is covered in lessons, including internet safety, alcohol, and sex and relationship safety.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, although it has improved since the previous inspection, it is not securing consistently good progress for all students in all classes and subjects.
- The teaching of English and science is good. This has secured students' good progress and in 2014 resulted in broadly average attainment at GCSE in these subjects.
- Teaching in mathematics is more variable, but in some classes, good and outstanding teaching is resulting in students' rapid progress. This is most marked in the higher sets where the most able students are being stretched and challenged and are on track to reach the highest grades at GCSE.
- This variation in the quality of teaching is found in most other subjects, including languages and humanities subjects.
- In general, the teaching of the most able students and of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good. Consequently, most students in these groups are making good progress.
- The academy knows who the disadvantaged students are, makes careful checks on their progress and has revised its plans to increase the students' progress and attainment. To date this has proved more

successful in English than in mathematics.

- Almost all staff have accurate information about what students already know and can do and take this into account when planning work for their classes. However, sometimes a particular activity lasts too long so that students lose interest and their attention wanes or they misbehave. On other occasions the students are confused about what they have to do or the work is too easy or repetitive.
- There are also some students for whom checks on their progress show that they are falling behind. Action is not always taken quickly enough to help these students to catch up and to achieve as well as they should.
- Where students make rapid progress, teachers have high expectations of what they can achieve and of how they should behave in lessons. Students rise to these challenges and are eager to complete harder work. However, this is not the case in all subjects and classes.
- Most students' work is marked regularly. In the best books there is sufficient detail so that students know how they can improve their work, but in other books there is little more than a tick and limited guidance to the students about the next steps they should take. In some books, there is little evidence that students have time to, or do, respond to the teachers' advice by improving their work.
- Despite a comprehensive training programme for teachers, the examples of the most effective approaches are not shared fully across the staff teams both within and across departments. Similarly, while subject leaders know what is needed and are eager to improve teaching in their subjects, for some this work is at a relatively early stage of development.
- The teaching of reading is good and there is a clear focus on literacy skills and technical vocabulary in the different subjects. While writing is taught well in English lessons, expectations that students will write accurately and at length are not always reinforced in the other subjects. There are some opportunities for students to use their mathematical skills, for example in science.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because in some subjects, including mathematics and geography, the proportions of students who make expected or better progress and the attainment of students are lower than seen nationally.
- The majority of students join the academy with skills that are significantly below average in English and mathematics.
- The overall rate of students' progress has increased since the previous inspection, but this is not consistent within and between the different subjects.
- Of the students who left Year 11 in 2014, many made good progress in English and science to gain GCSE results which were broadly in line with the national averages in these subjects. However, the progress of the same students in mathematics, languages and humanities subjects was not as good and results in these subjects were significantly below average.
- Although improvements are being made, a similar pattern remains for a minority of the academy's current students.
- In previous years, some students have been entered for GCSE examinations before the end of Year 11. There is no evidence that this has adversely affected their achievement and for some it has built their confidence in taking external examinations.
- A very small number of students attend courses in basic skills and work-related learning at Tameside College. This has proved successful in retaining these students in education and in ensuring their renewed interest in learning.
- A number of students join the academy at the end of Year 6 with skills which are well below the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. They receive good help through the Year 7 catch-up funding which is helping to build their confidence and to improve their skills.
- The attainment and progress of the most able students have improved since the previous inspection. Many of these students make good progress, particularly in English. There is also evidence that a greater number of the most able students in the current Year 11 are also on track to gain the highest GCSE grades of A* and A in mathematics by the end of this school year.
- In 2014, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and other students in the academy was the equivalent of one GCSE grade in English and mathematics. The gap was also the equivalent of one grade in English compared to non-disadvantaged students nationally, but the equivalent of two grades in mathematics. The academy's revised plans are proving effective in further closing this gap for current

students, although a gap still remains, particularly in mathematics.

- Minority ethnic students generally make good progress in a range of subjects during their time at the academy.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good because of the additional help provided for them which is boosting their confidence and improving their skills in reading and writing.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Attainment and progress have improved markedly in nearly all areas since the sixth form was established in the academy four years ago. The numbers in the sixth form are increasing each year as its success and reputation grow.
- Attainment is broadly in line with that seen nationally by the end of Year 13. This represents good achievement, as students' attainment on entry to the sixth form is below average. All students who entered the sixth form without a grade C in GCSE mathematics and English have now improved their grades.
- Students, including the most able students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, make good progress. The success rates for disadvantaged students are particularly high, so that these students do at least as well as, and often better than, others.
- The sixth form also promotes the achievement of female students well. Many disadvantaged and female students appreciate the personal atmosphere and additional help they receive. The academy's sixth form is effective in providing access to post-16 education for many in the local community who otherwise might not remain in education.
- Stronger sixth form subjects in terms of A-level results include sciences, psychology, history and English. Students' success in mathematics is less secure, but weaknesses in the subject are being overcome.
- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently good. There is a strong focus on examination preparation, although the most able students are also encouraged to undertake their own research and to read widely. Links with Manchester High School for Girls are proving effective in helping to develop teaching at A-level.
- Retention rates are above those nationally. Progression from the sixth form to university is very strong with all Year 13 leavers going on to university in 2012 and 2013 and 90% in 2014, as some are taking a gap year.
- The sixth form is led well and leaders are effective in supporting students' well-being and achievement. Sixth form students make a good contribution to the rest of the academy by taking on responsibilities in the academy and in the wider community and by helping younger students. The sixth form students provide good role models for others and make a major contribution to raising expectations and aspirations within the academy and more widely.

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	135508
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	453470

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	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,414
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Munro
Principal	Stephen Ball
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2013
Telephone number	0161 241 9555
Fax number	0161 214 8299
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