

# Wrockwardine Wood Arts Academy

New Road, Wrockwardine Wood, Telford, TF2 6JZ

**Inspection dates** 3–4 February 2015

| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected as an academy |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Inadequate</b> <b>4</b>             |
| Leadership and management      | Inadequate           | 4                                      |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | Requires improvement | 3                                      |
| Quality of teaching            | Inadequate           | 4                                      |
| Achievement of pupils          | Inadequate           | 4                                      |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement in English and mathematics is inadequate. The proportion of students making expected progress is too low and has declined.
- The achievement of disadvantaged students has also declined and the gap between their achievement and that of other students nationally has widened.
- Other key groups of students in the academy, including boys, the most able, and disabled students and those who have special educational needs, underachieve.
- Leaders' evaluation of the academy's performance is inaccurate. Governors have had an overgenerous view of how well the academy is doing and have been unable to hold leaders to account.
- Leaders and governors have failed to bring about essential improvements in students' achievement because they have focused on issues, such as planning for a forthcoming school merger and a new school building.
- Teaching is inadequate because it has not enabled students to achieve well over time in a number of key subject areas.
- Teachers do not plan work to meet the needs of different groups of students. As a result, variations between the achievements of different groups of students have occurred. Some teachers accept poor standards of written work.
- Behaviour in lessons is not consistently good enough. Low-level disruption hinders students' learning in some lessons.

### The school has the following strengths

- Students feel well cared for. Relationships between teachers and students are positive.
- Students achieve well in some subjects, particularly arts-related subjects, such as music and dance.
- The academy provides a range of opportunities to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 33 lessons. They carried out some joint observations with senior leaders. Observations of other aspects of the academy’s work were also made, such as tutor time and assemblies.
- Inspectors also looked at students’ books and folders during lessons and as a separate activity.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, governors and academy staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- There were 17 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire that provided evidence for the inspection.
- The views of the 39 members of staff who responded to Ofsted’s questionnaire were analysed.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the academy’s self-evaluation and improvement plans, academy policies, and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Information about students’ progress, attainment, attendance and exclusions were also examined as were the academy’s records of safeguarding, and of teachers’ performance linked to salary scales.

## Inspection team

|                               |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Chris Chapman, Lead inspector | Seconded Inspector   |
| Rosemary Myers                | Additional Inspector |
| Michael Hiscox                | Additional Inspector |
| Kerin Jones                   | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- Wrockwardine Wood Performing Arts Academy converted to become an academy on 1 April 2013. When its predecessor school, Wrockwardine Wood Arts College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged good, grade 2, overall.
- The academy is a smaller than average secondary school. The academy has been part of Telford Co-operative Multi-Academy trust, which consisted of four secondary academies in Telford. This trust is in the process of dissolution. In July 2014, the academy will vacate its current premises and move to a new building funded through the government's Building Schools for the Future programme. It will merge with Sutherland Academy to form a new school.
- The academy is currently seeking a sponsor.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students who are those eligible for support from the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for students known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after in public care), at approximately 36%, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The majority of students are from a White British background. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- A small number of students in Key Stage 4 attend Telford AFC Learning on a part time basis to study vocational courses.
- In 2014, the academy did not meet the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, so the impact of leaders at all levels secures a rapid rise in the standards of education provided by:
  - ensuring that all leaders use a broad range of information about students' achievement to accurately evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the academy
  - using information about students' achievement to judge the quality and impact of teaching over time
  - making sure that improvement plans specify clear actions to be taken and provide criteria against which the impact of these actions can be measured and monitored by leaders and governors
  - ensuring that all leaders, including the Principal and governors have the capacity to focus on the core issues of academy improvement.
- Improve achievement, so that all students, and groups of students, make good or better progress by:
  - ensuring that rigorous tracking of students' progress in all subjects identifies underachievement quickly and prompt action is taken to bring about improvement
  - carefully monitoring the impact of actions taken to raise the achievement of disadvantaged students to ensure that gaps between their attainment and that of other students in the academy and nationally close
  - developing a range of strategies to better engage boys in reading and writing and so raise their achievement in English
  - accelerating the progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs through

more carefully targeted strategies to support the development of their literary and numeracy skills

- ensuring that the most able students are sufficiently challenged to secure the highest grades
- developing systematically the reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills of students in all areas of the curriculum.

■ Improve teaching by:

- ensuring that all teachers use the information available about the students they teach to plan lessons that address their different needs, and enable all groups of students to make rapid progress
- making sure that best practice in marking is applied consistently, so that students act on clear guidance offered by teachers to make improvements to their work
- applying consistently high expectations of students' behaviour and learning in all lessons
- insisting on high standards of written work, including that of handwriting and presentation.

An external review of governance, and of the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership is inadequate because leaders have not secured essential improvements in students' achievement. In the year that the academy opened, achievement, particularly in English and mathematics, was too low. Examination results in 2014 show that leaders failed to arrest a decline in standards.
- A range of outside issues, since the academy opened, have drawn the capacity of leaders and governors away from the core purpose of the academy. These include planning for the merger with another school under the local authority Building Schools for the Future programme, and providing support for other schools within the multi-academy trust. As a result, the quality of education provided by the academy has deteriorated.
- Senior leaders' and subject leaders' evaluations of the performance of the academy are inaccurate. Leaders do not take into account a broad enough range of information when making judgements about performance and particularly do not take enough account of students' progress, including that of different groups of students, in relation to the standards achieved nationally. Leaders and governors are therefore overgenerous in their views of how well the academy is doing.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is weak, therefore their written plans for improvement are vague and not focused sharply enough on how to overcome past weaknesses in students' achievement. Performance targets for raising the achievement of different student groups and reducing the variations across and between subjects areas are imprecise. These plans lack detailed actions and consequently provide poor strategic direction to drive forward improvements.
- Performance management arrangements have been improved with the introduction of a new, corporate system. These make teachers accountable to both the delivery of whole school teaching and achievement priorities and to the 'Teachers' Standards'. As yet, these targets have not been specific enough to have a proven impact on raising standards and in the past, have not been used well enough to hold teachers to account for poor performance.
- Leaders recognise the need to improve the quality of teaching. Staff undertake regular, weekly training. This is focused on developing appropriate aspects of teaching. However, these improvements have not been rapid enough to raise students' low levels of achievement, and have not yet led to consistent improvements in standards across the academy.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, check the quality of teaching and teachers' marking. Leaders are able to identify some improvements as a result of these checks. Leaders have not focused enough on the impact of teaching on students learning and progress over time. This has resulted in an unrealistic view of the quality of teaching.
- Teachers' assessment of the achievement of students has been inaccurate in the past. In 2014 better results were expected than were achieved. New systems have now been introduced to enable leaders, including subject leaders to monitor the progress of students more closely and accurately. This information is increasingly used by leaders to identify students who are at risk of underachievement so that additional support can be put in place. It is too early to gauge how effective these new systems are.
- Subject leaders are now more aware of the progress of different student groups within their subject area. Their work is further developed through participation in accredited leadership programmes. However, the differences in the achievement of students across subjects demonstrate the variable impact of these leaders.
- The curriculum offers pathways for students of different abilities. For example, the most able students study separate sciences, and lower-ability students have access to a range of vocational courses to suit their needs and interests. Additional support and tailored study programmes are offered for students with weak basic skills on entry to the academy. These are resulting in quicker progress for these students in

literacy and numeracy.

- Students learn about modern British values through visits, assemblies and through 'morals, beliefs and values' lessons. They have an awareness of different faiths and cultures, are involved in fundraising work and the student council provides a voice for students. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is further promoted through extra-curricular activities that encompass sports, specialist clubs such as the chess club, and impressive performing arts opportunities, which have enabled the academy choir to perform to audiences internationally.
- Students receive helpful information, advice and guidance to prepare them for the next stage of their education. As a result, the proportion of students who leave the academy and are not in education, training or employment is low.
- Although the academy tackles discrimination and is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, the gaps between the achievements of different groups of students mean that the impact of this work is not successful.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged students is used to provide increased pastoral support, extra tuition and access to opportunities that these students otherwise may not have. This funding has not been used well enough in the past to secure good achievement for disadvantaged students. However, the progress of disadvantaged students in Key Stage 3 is improving and the in-school gap is beginning to reduce. The attendance of disadvantaged students is also beginning to improve.
- The attendance of students who go to alternative provision is monitored effectively through close contact with providers.
- The Telford Cooperative Multi-academy Trust has been ineffective in providing necessary support and challenge to help the academy to improve. These arrangements are now in the process of dissolution and the academy is currently seeking an alternative sponsor that can offer greater capacity to support academy improvement.
- The Principal has established a culture in which staff and students feel valued and well cared for. Parents are supportive of the academy's work.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers until improvements are judged to have taken place.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors value the ethos that the Principal has created and are proud of the reputation of the academy in the community. However, governors have not been rigorous enough in their duties to hold leaders or staff to account for continued low standards.
  - Governors receive regular reports on the academy's performance, including information about the achievement of students and the quality of teaching. Governors' understanding of achievement data is inconsistent. They have too readily accepted the information they are provided with, rather than question or challenge it. They are aware for example, that students leaving the academy in 2014 did not achieve well, but do not understand the full magnitude of underachievement.
  - The multi-academy trust and the merger arrangements have drawn the governing body's attention away from academy improvement issues.
  - Governors have managed the finances of the academy well. Working alongside the Principal, they have eradicated a considerable legacy deficit. The governing body does not scrutinise enough the performance of teachers to hold them to account through performance-related pay.
  - Governors have received information about how the pupil premium is spent, but have not held leaders to account for the lack of impact of this spending on outcomes for disadvantaged students.
  - Governors have received information on safeguarding, including the most recent statutory guidance. They also receive regular updates on child protection cases and safeguarding issues. Procedures fulfil statutory guidance. However, they have not ensured that the child protection policy is updated to reflect this guidance.

**The behaviour and safety of students** requires improvement**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- Students' attitudes to learning are not consistently positive. In some lessons, low-level disruption hinders progress. Students say that behaviour in some lessons is not always good.
- Conduct during informal times of the day, such as at break times and lunchtime is generally calm and orderly. Most students are courteous and respectful. However, a minority of students can be boisterous. Inspectors heard a number of students swearing.
- The academy maintains detailed records of behaviour over time. These demonstrate some reduction in the proportion of students sanctioned for presenting negative behaviour. For example, the number of students visiting the 'Focus Room', the academy's internal exclusion unit, has reduced.
- The academy operates a range of interventions, additional support and works well with parents to improve the conduct of those students who present challenging behaviour. These measures include personalisation of the curriculum and part-time placements at alternative provision. As a result, the behaviour and attendance for some of these students have improved.
- The large majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey said that students are well-behaved.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement.
- In the first year that the academy opened, exclusions were too high. These reduced by approximately one third last year, but look set to rise this year. There have been no permanent exclusions.
- Students say that they understand how to keep safe and are aware of the dangers of drugs, alcohol and the issues around internet safety and social media. They are not however, aware of a broad enough range of risks, including the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Attendance is broadly average. Overall figures for the current academic year are slightly reduced based on the same period of time last academic year. The proportion of students who do not attend the academy regularly has reduced this year.
- Students say that bullying is rare and is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Parents confirm this view. Student 'anti-bullying ambassadors' provide a useful point of peer contact for students to report concerns to.
- Students feel cared for and well looked after. Parents say that the levels of care, guidance and support provided are the academy's strengths.
- Staff have received training on how to keep children safe in the academy. They know who to report concerns to and have been given an update on the most recent government guidance.

**The quality of teaching** is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because students make inadequate progress in their learning over time. Although there is now greater stability in teaching staff, particularly in English and mathematics, inconsistencies persist in the quality of teaching across the academy.
- In some lessons, low-level disruption slows the progress of students. Off-task chatter, students shouting

out answers, or talking while the teacher is talking disrupt the pace of learning. Teachers are not always quick enough to challenge inappropriate behaviour and standards tolerated by teachers are inconsistent.

- Students do not always show pride in their work. Expectations of presentation are too low in some subjects, particularly that of handwriting. Teachers failed to stop students' graffiti in some books. The quality of writing, particularly that of boys, is sometimes poor.
- Teachers are often aware of the different abilities and needs of students in their lessons, but many do not adapt tasks well enough to meet the needs of different students. Sometimes the less able do not always receive enough support and so struggle to finish tasks. The most able are not challenged enough with more difficult work than their peers. Little consideration in lessons is given to the needs of disadvantaged students which accounts for the variations in achievement between groups of students over time. Too little is being done in lessons and in teachers' planning to narrow these gaps.
- The quality of marking is improving, but is still inconsistent. In the best examples seen, students were given clear guidance about what they had done well and what they needed to do to improve. Students were also given the opportunity to reflect on their teacher's comment and make improvements to their work, so that progress was clear. However, this practice is not applied rigorously by all teachers. Sometimes marking is irregular, and teachers do not monitor that students have acted on the advice offered.
- Where teaching is strong it is underpinned by the teacher's good subject knowledge. In these examples, teachers set a clear direction for learning, plan interesting tasks and ask students challenging questions to extend their understanding of the topic.
- Positive relationships between teachers and students are a key feature of the best lessons. In a Year 11 drama lesson for example, the positive climate for learning established by the teacher promoted high levels of engagement. This was reflected in the mature, searching discussions students had about the themes, ideas and characters in the texts they had studied. The spiritual, moral, cultural and social understanding of these students thrived, and, as a result, students produced convincing interpretations of characters through their performances.
- The academy has sensibly prioritised developing teachers' skills in promoting literacy across the curriculum. Teachers increasingly pick out students' spelling and grammatical errors when marking. There is also a focus on making key vocabulary and subject specific terminology used in lessons clear and understood for students. In a Year 11 science lesson for example, the teacher clearly outlined scientific prefixes so that students could identify chemical compounds. However, teachers do not have high enough or consistent, expectations of the quantity and quality of written work that students produce, particularly that of boys. Little evidence was seen of teachers reinforcing students' mathematical skills in subjects outside of mathematics.

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- In the first year that the academy opened, students made less progress than other students nationally in English and mathematics. In 2014, the proportion of students making good or better progress from their individual starting points in English and mathematics declined.
- Achievement also dropped in other key measures, including the proportion of students securing 5 or more good grades in GCSE including English and mathematics, and in the proportion gaining 5 A\*-G grades at GCSE. Attainment is significantly below that of other schools and below the government's minimum expectations, known as floor standards. The academy re-entered students for GCSE English and mathematics examinations in the summer of 2014. When these results are taken into account, they show a better picture of achievement, but still show a decline on the previous year.
- The achievement of disadvantaged students has been low in relation to that of other students nationally and dropped in 2014. For example, in English, less than half of disadvantaged students made expected progress. Disadvantaged students made better progress than other students in the academy in



mathematics, but did not make good progress overall. As a result of this inadequate progress over time, in 2014, disadvantaged students attained over half a grade less than other students in the academy, and over one grade less than other students nationally in English and in mathematics.

- There are wide gaps between the achievement of boys and girls, particularly in English. Boys underachieve in relation to girls in the academy and in relation to other boys nationally.
- The most able students, those who gain a Level 5 or above at Key Stage 2, also underachieve in relation to their peers nationally. Not enough students who enter the academy with high performance in English and mathematics make good progress. They also underachieve in other subjects, such as the science and languages. The proportion of students securing the best grades across a range of subjects dropped in 2014.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make slower progress than other students in the academy or nationally. Better targeted support, particularly for literacy, is beginning to accelerate the progress of those students currently on-roll in the academy.
- The small proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and students who speak English as an additional language often make better progress than other students in the academy.
- While achievement is too low across a range of other subjects, including science, French and information technology, students achieve well in arts-related subjects, particularly music and dance.
- The academy has used early entry to GCSE in English and mathematics. Although students have had the opportunity to re-sit examinations, this strategy has not been successful in securing good achievement in these subjects.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is increasingly well used to support those students with low attainment on entry. Students undertake a programme to improve their reading and writing skills and benefit from smaller class sizes with additional support. As a result, these students are making quicker progress than they have done in the past and there is clear evidence that their reading ages are improving.
- Students on alternative provision undertake vocational courses that are matched to their needs and interests so that they gain skills that support them in the progression to their next stage of learning.

## 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

|                                |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 139450             |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Telford and Wrekin |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 456302             |

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

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Secondary                |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy converter        |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11–16                    |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                    |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 734                      |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body       |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Catherine Seddon         |
| <b>Principal</b>                           | John Jones               |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | Not previously inspected |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01952 388300             |
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