

City of Peterborough Academy

Reeves Way, Peterborough, PE1 5LQ

Inspection dates 21–22 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The Principal, his team and the governing body have been highly effective in establishing a culture in which students believe that they can achieve well and take great pride in doing so. Students understand the importance of education and cherish academic success.
- Students, regardless of their abilities and often from very low starting points, are making rapid and sustained progress. This is enabling them to work towards the standards expected for their age very quickly.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. They are supportive of each other when in lessons or around the academy site. These very positive relationships enable students to work productively and with total confidence. Students are highly appreciative of the efforts of adults in their school.
- Students feel extremely safe, and are safe. This is due to the successful strategies employed by academy leaders, which include the provision of a high quality 'Year 7 base'.
- Teaching is highly effective. The high expectations of all teachers, along with excellent assessment help students to foster a love of learning and gives them the confidence to succeed.
- Literacy is a key feature of all teaching. While demands for students to write regularly and at length are high, their formal writing skills still need to be developed further, particularly for the most able.
- The progress of each student is very closely monitored. Rapid action, in class and through additional sessions is taken to ensure gaps in students' learning are addressed and they do not fall behind.
- Students regularly and honestly reflect upon their learning and progress and make effective use of the detailed guidance provided by their teachers and mentors.
- Students with disabilities and those who have special educational needs achieve exceptionally well due to the high quality support that they receive.
- Additional government funding has been used very well to support students who need extra help. As a result these students achieve as well as, and in many cases even better than their peers.
- Due to the very well planned provision for their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development students display high levels of tolerance and contribute extremely well to the harmonious academy community.
- The sponsor Trust provides high quality support and challenge to academy leaders. Through regular reviews and frequent communication the high standards already established are maintained and further developed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students' learning in 17 lessons, 3 of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. They examined students' work in lessons and in a separate work scrutiny.
- Inspectors met with academy leaders, teachers, support staff and members of the Trust Board.
- Inspectors observed students at break, lunch and when leaving the academy at the end of the day. They talked with many students about their life and learning at the academy.
- The inspectors took account of 21 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaires. There was an insufficient number of responses on the Ofsted Parent View online survey to form conclusions. Inspectors considered the academy's own parental survey responses.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of information provided by the academy including self-evaluation and planning documentation, external reviews undertaken, safeguarding documentation and records of behaviour and achievement.

Inspection team

John Lucas, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Anthony Sharpe

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The City of Peterborough Academy was opened in September 2013 by the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust.
- The academy currently has students in Year 7 and Year 8. As a result, it is at the moment significantly smaller than most secondary schools.
- There are more boys than girls in the academy.
- The vast majority of students are White British and a very small minority are of Eastern European heritage.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is in line with national averages.
- The proportion of the pupils eligible for the pupil premium is significantly above the national average. This is additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The Principal took up his post in April 2013. He is supported by an Executive Principal.
- The academy does not use any additional, off-site provision for its students.
- Students will first take external examinations in September 2018.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To further accelerate the progress of students by:
 - developing strategies to improve students' formal academic writing, particularly for the most able.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Led by the inspirational and highly respected Principal, leaders at all levels are determined to remove any barriers that may prevent students from achieving excellence. They have been exceptionally successful in establishing an academy in which students can flourish academically and socially.
- Staff fully support the stated academy vision 'to provide the best possible education in a calm, controlled environment enabling self and mutual respect to develop'. They work very effectively to create a caring environment which enables students to develop their confidence and self-esteem and therefore make rapid progress. Leaders are reflective and understand the barriers to student's achievement and how to overcome them. For example, senior leaders have developed very effective links with primary schools which help them to address low levels of literacy early.
- Leaders are relentless in their focus on ensuring high quality teaching. Highly effective systems hold teachers to account for the progress and attainment of students. Leaders monitor the standards of teaching frequently. Teachers are able to learn from each other and from others across the sponsor Trust due to skilfully targeted training. As a consequence, teaching is of a high quality and is helping students to achieve very well.
- Teachers are universally positive about how training has helped them to develop their skills, such as the delivery of phonics (the links between sounds and letters), which is helping the least-able students to make rapid progress in their literacy skills. Newly-qualified teachers benefit from a bespoke induction programme which has helped them plan effectively for the needs and abilities of their students. These training opportunities have had a direct impact on the accelerated progress students make and form part of academy leaders' very successful succession planning strategy.
- Academy leaders make skilful and highly effective use of additional funding for disadvantaged students. Strategies such as an offsite induction programme and English language support for families who need it have, along with the strong teaching, enabled these students to make at least as much progress as their peers.
- Senior leaders have very high expectations of subject leaders who play an important role in the success of the academy. Subject leaders value training opportunities such as the 'aspiring leaders' programme, which has developed their skills in making excellent use of progress data to improve their teaching and leadership. They carefully monitor the progress of students, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the curriculum in their subjects. As a result they have changed the curriculum to make sure that it is well suited to students' needs and capabilities. For example, in mathematics provision has been adapted for students who entered the academy with attainment which is exceptionally low. Through the provision of a personalised curriculum these students are making exceptional progress and are closing the gaps with their peers at a rapid rate.
- The Principal and his senior team successfully evaluate the curriculum, which is broad and balanced to make sure that it is accurately matched to the needs and capabilities of the growing student body and ensures equality of opportunity. For example, additional English is provided for students, many of whom arrive with exceptionally low literacy skills. This has led to substantial improvements in their reading ages. Students who have English as an additional language are provided with highly effective programmes to help them develop their English language skills. This has instilled confidence in these students to such an extent that some are now teaching English to their own families.
- The curriculum is enriched by an extensive range of activities, including visits in Britain and abroad as well as by 'drop down' days which focus upon themes such as religious diversity, ecology or modern foreign languages. A wide range of sporting activities, such as rock-climbing and sailing motivates students and develops their physical wellbeing, often giving them opportunities they may not otherwise experience. Students take part in a wide range of community, charity and cultural activities within school and further afield. This has helped to develop students' knowledge and understanding of different groups within the community.

- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is exceptionally well promoted. This contributes to the harmonious, inclusive atmosphere across the academy. Students benefit from events such as the Fibonacci Focus Day, which broaden their knowledge and deepens their cultural understanding across a range of subjects. The comprehensive tutor programme, including assemblies, covers topics such as forgiveness, evolution and resilience which promote high levels of tolerance and reflection. Teachers' careful planning means that students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is woven into the lessons of many subjects such as music, art and computer science. In an English lesson, Year 8 students were able to offer well considered comparisons of the education systems of different countries and to challenge each other's viewpoints. Students speak with great pride about how they have rapidly grown in confidence. They are developing strong leadership skills through their contribution to the academy's council, peer mentor scheme and by helping primary school students through their work as sports leaders.
- Students are able deepen their knowledge and understanding of modern Britain by taking part in a range of activities such as academy elections, anti-discrimination events and a parliamentary project. Students in a Year 8 art lesson were developing creative designs that represent British culture and diversity.
- Students in both Years 7 and 8 are being very well prepared for the next stage of education and for later life. They receive information, advice and guidance so that they can make informed choices about their futures. Right from Year 7, speakers and employability days are broadening students' awareness of the range of career opportunities available to them. Every opportunity is taken by staff to communicate high aspirations, for example, through displays such as the 'aspiration wall' which carries photos of each student and their ambitions for their future careers.
- Parent information evenings are well attended and academy leaders work hard, with considerable success, to engage with parents and carers. Events held in partnership with a local college and other providers are helping to increase this engagement further. For example, a creative arts project in which parents and carers of disadvantaged students were able to work alongside their children has led to stronger parental involvement in the work of the academy.
- The sponsor Trust provides strong support and challenge to leaders and staff across the academy. Senior and middle leaders from the sponsor Trust's other schools check the work done by academy staff. This confirms that leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their academy. Leaders within the academy speak with pride about being part of the sponsor Trust and are overwhelmingly positive about the impact that working with other academies in the sponsor Trust is having on raising the standards of teaching and achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the academy is outstanding. Members of the sponsor Trust have high expectations of academy leaders and staff and hold them to account for the quality of education provided.
 - Trust members have detailed knowledge of the academy's strengths and areas for development, including those in teaching and the progress of all groups of students. The Executive Principal visits the academy each week to monitor all aspects of the work of academy staff. As a result of his rigorous challenge and shared determination that every student should excel, the high standards set from the establishment of the academy are being maintained.
 - The sponsor Trust makes sure that the academy's finances are robustly managed. Trust members know how pupil premium funding is allocated, and analyse its impact upon the achievement of disadvantaged students. They make sure that teachers' salary progression depends on the progress students make.
 - The sponsor Trust provides excellent support for the academy's leaders and makes sure that the academy fully meets all statutory requirements, including those relating to safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Students in both year groups display a love of learning and a clear pride in their academy. In this small academy students are known to all staff, including the Principal. This knowledge is essential in addressing issues before they become significant. This is appreciated by students who informed inspectors that the teachers 'do all they can for us'. Relationships are characterised

by high levels of mutual respect and tolerance for others.

- Students greatly enjoy school, attend very well and conduct themselves with dignity and maturity. They move around the site happily and are confident when speaking with teachers and visitors to the academy. Arriving promptly to lessons equipped and ready to learn, students work extremely well together and when asked to work alone. They are supportive of each other and are considerate of the ideas and feelings of others and as a result are not afraid to challenge each other's thinking in lessons, which they do using subject specific language.
- The high profile academy 'aspire' reward system is valued by students, who wear their 'aspire' badges with pride. Academic success is prized and this is having a highly motivational impact upon the students and their desire to excel. Students are motivated to read, often moving with great haste to attend additional literacy sessions. They are keen to learn and take part in sporting activities as they know that their efforts and achievements are celebrated by adults and students in the academy.
- Students have a clear determination to succeed. They appreciate the high expectations set by the Principal and his staff. In the words of one student 'We are pushed in the right way' and from another 'We get a great education'. This extremely positive attitude to learning is seen in books, where students take self-assessment seriously and will express their disappointment if they do not get answers correct.
- Disruption to learning is extremely rare. Students respond well to the high standards of behaviour that are modelled by adults who work with them, even with teachers who may not be familiar to them. This creates a climate in which learning can flourish and allows students to work with confidence. It has also helped to foster higher levels of resilience which empower students to attempt high level tasks in subjects such as English and mathematics.
- Students appreciate the facilities that are available to them. They care for the academy environment, which is in a pristine condition. The library is heavily used at break times as students seek to further their knowledge through reading, working together or by using computers. Many arrive early in the morning and remain behind at the end of the day to make full use of the academy facilities for learning. This independence in learning has been explicitly developed by staff and sets students up for the demands of the school's challenging curriculum.
- Attendance is high. Academy leaders have used a range of effective and innovative approaches to improve this further. As a result the proportion of students who are persistent absentees is well below national averages.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students feel very safe. They know who to speak to if they experience any difficulties and are confident that they can approach one of the well-trained student 'peer mentors' or any adult in the academy for help. Students assert that academy leaders address any issues quickly and effectively.
- Bullying is exceptionally rare. Students are aware of different kinds of bullying and explained to inspectors that when it does occur it is tackled swiftly and effectively.
- Students behave safely in lessons and around the academy site, which is well supervised by adults. Provision such as the 'Year 7 base', a central part of the academy site and ethos, adds to this feeling of safety and has helped to develop the powerful sense of community that is a strong feature of this academy.
- Students gain a detailed understanding of e-safety through assembly programmes, tutor sessions and in lessons. They are able to explain how they use this information very effectively to stay safe.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The consistent, high quality teaching in very many subjects is enabling students to make rapid and

sustained progress. Teachers' strong subject knowledge and high expectations enable students to progress quickly, and move on to more challenging work. Teachers pitch work at a high level and structure their teaching thoughtfully enabling students to work at these high levels despite their low starting points. Students in a Year 8 mathematics lesson displayed resilience and confidence when tackling higher-level algebraic problems and were able to make strong progress above that which would be expected given their age and abilities.

- Teachers consistently plan learning activities that are well-matched to the capabilities of their students. These activities help to generate a love for learning in almost all cases. Careful planning in a Year 7 science lesson and the teacher's insistence of the use of high level scientific language enabled students to work together to carry out an experiment. They worked enthusiastically to analyse their findings and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the reactivity of metals.
- Teachers understand what students are doing and regularly assess the progress they are making in lessons. They intervene where it becomes clear that they are ready to move on to the next stage of learning, or need further explanation. In a Year 8 computer science lesson, the skilful intervention by the teacher and acceleration of pace helped students to further develop their skills in creating formulae to calculate budgets. Students spoke positively about how this had helped them to learn new ways of working and so make rapid progress. The helpful and frequent feedback provided by teachers encourages students to reflect upon and improve their work.
- Support staff are deployed very effectively in the classroom and aid the learning of students with disabilities and special educational needs as well as that of those with English as an additional language. Learning mentors are well informed because lesson plans are shared with them in advance. Well-trained mentors make use of very effective strategies that accelerate the progress of those students in need of support. In a Year 8 English lesson, students with English as an additional language benefitted from expert intervention and were able to make strong progress when working on sentence construction.
- Literacy, numeracy and communication strategies are very well-planned and implemented across the academy. These plans include expectations that all teachers teach literacy and should expect at least good levels of writing from students, many of whom arrive at the academy with very weak literacy skills. As a result of this effective planning and enthusiastic delivery of literacy, students are making significant progress in their reading ages. For example, the reading ages of Year 7 students increased by an average of almost 2 years in their first term at academy. Students read widely and often, with very many making use of the library as well as other areas of school to read for pleasure. Not all teachers accelerate the progress made by more able students by demanding high levels of formal academic writing from them.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students enter the academy with attainment that is significantly below those expected at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics, with 38% achieving a level 4 in English and mathematics, compared to the national average of 79%.
- Work seen in lessons, students' books, as well as a range of information provided by the academy indicates that almost all students are making rapid and sustained progress. They are working, in many areas at levels that would be typical for their age, despite their very low starting points. This acceleration in the knowledge, skills and understanding they have acquired in a very short time is why their achievement is outstanding. All students are set high targets. They are taught very effectively to meet these targets, which are subsequently increased when they are met.
- Academy leaders, including subject leaders track the progress of the students relentlessly and provide swift and well-targeted support for students where it is required. The percentage of students making expected and above expected progress is high across many subjects, including English and mathematics. The gap in attainment with other students nationally is closing rapidly and in many cases at a remarkable rate. For example, students' mental mathematical skills are high because they regularly practice them. In English students understand how to compare, contrast and form an argument. Students are proficient in analysing each other's work and applying this to their own work. For example, they noted in their peer's book 'you have used a source and explained why'.

- Pupils want to do well and communicate to their teachers in writing when they haven't understood. Teachers follow up on this feedback, helping to accelerate progress.
- Students with disabilities and special educational needs demonstrate very high rates of progress from their individual starting points in English and mathematics, and across many other subjects. For example, students in Year 7 made on average, 17 months progress in reading in 7 months. This is due to the strong teaching, expert support and intervention and highly effective transition work, such as the Year 6 into Year 7 summer school.
- Students supported by the pupil premium make accelerated progress in English and mathematics and in many cases make even more progress than other students and so catch up with them. This is due to the high expectations of academy staff and the effective teaching and support that they receive.
- The most-able students make accelerated levels of progress in English and mathematics and other subject areas. Their progress is above that expected but could be even greater particularly in writing given their appetite for learning, which has come about because of the highly effective strategies employed by adults within the academy.

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	139082
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	450045

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	The Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust
Chair	Sir Barry Day OBE
Principal	Dale Hardy
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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