

# Fulwood Academy

Black Bull Lane, Fulwood, Preston, Lancashire, PR2 9YR

**Inspection dates** 23–24 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is below average.
- The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and their peers in the academy and nationally, although narrowing, is too wide.
- Students who enter the academy having attained high levels at the end of Key Stage 2 do not always gain the best grades at GCSE.
- Although students' progress is improving overall, it is not accelerating quickly enough in mathematics.
- Teachers do not always challenge students to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching across the academy, including in the sixth form. While some is excellent, other teaching is not strong enough to compensate for past underachievement.
- The quality of feedback to students from their teachers, although much improved, is not consistently effective.
- Errors in students' basic punctuation are not routinely addressed in subjects other than English.
- Teaching does not always address the specific needs of some students well enough. Targets for some students who have special educational needs are not always appropriate.
- The information, advice and guidance provided to students entering the sixth form has not always been appropriate. This has led to some students being enrolled on courses for which they are not well suited.
- Opportunities for sixth form students to contribute to the academy and to do activities other than those related to achieving qualifications are not wide enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- The Principal leads with skill and determination. In his first year in post he has improved the academy markedly and has the tenacity and insight to secure further improvement. The academy's self-evaluation is thorough and its action plans are ambitious, but achievable.
- The strong senior leadership team is relentless in its work to improve the academy. Middle leaders are increasingly skilled in improving teaching in their subjects.
- Students behave well, feel safe, their attendance is good and they have positive attitudes to learning.
- There is an increasing amount of good teaching leading to better achievement, especially in English.
- The academy's promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a notable strength. British values underpin the academy's work.
- The sponsor and governors provide effective support and challenge to academy leaders.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a wide range of subjects across all key stages. They undertook four lesson observations with the academy’s senior leaders. They also visited house assemblies and tutorial sessions.
- Students in Years 11 and 13 had completed their external examinations and were not on site at the time of the inspection. Inspectors took into account the academy’s data about their achievement, as well as data relating to the achievement of students currently at the academy.
- Inspectors held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body, the academy’s senior leaders, departmental leaders, subject leaders, teachers, support staff and the librarian. They met with the academy’s improvement partner and talked to many students informally across the academy. Inspectors held more formal discussions with three groups of students of different ages and scrutinised their work.
- Various documents were considered by inspectors. These included: the academy’s safeguarding policy and records of behaviour incidents; the academy’s improvement plan; the academy’s evaluation of its own effectiveness; examples of departmental action plans and evaluation documents; leaders’ monitoring records; information relating to the appraisal of teachers’ performance; the minutes of governing body meetings and reports written by the academy’s improvement partner.
- The 15 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, made in the 365 days prior to the end of the inspection, were considered, along with the academy’s own recent surveys of parents’ views. The 75 questionnaires completed by staff were also reviewed.

## Inspection team

Shirley Gornall, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Peter McKay

Additional Inspector

Fiona Dixon

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.*

### Information about this school

- This is a stand-alone, sponsored academy that is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students who are disadvantaged and, therefore, eligible for support from pupil premium funding is high. The pupil premium is additional money made available to support those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for children in the care of the local authority.
- Around two-fifths of students, a proportion higher than that found nationally, are from minority ethnic backgrounds, of which the most sizeable groups are students of Indian or Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is much higher than found nationally.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is much higher than average.
- In 2014, the academy did not meet the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- When it was inspected in October 2013, the academy was judged to require special measures. It has received four monitoring inspections by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors since then.
- The Principal took up post in May 2014. There have been other significant staffing changes at the academy since its last inspection.
- A few students are educated full time off site at Prestons College, Larches House or Creative Workshop Preston. A few other students follow courses in mechanics or hair and beauty at Preston College or Ashton College for one session each week.
- The academy has received support from two outstanding teaching schools: Bishop Rawstone Church of England Academy and Hodgson Academy.

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

- Raise attainment for all groups of students across subjects, but especially in mathematics, and close the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged students and their peers in the academy and nationally.
- Improve teaching in the academy at all key stages by:
  - ensuring that there is sufficient academic rigour to meet the demands of the new National Curriculum and examination specifications
  - increasing the level of challenge for the most-able students so that more reach the top grades of which they are capable
  - improving the consistency and effectiveness of teachers' feedback to students
  - furthering the academy's drive to improve students' literacy skills by helping them to punctuate their writing correctly
  - ensuring that targets set for students who have special educational needs are appropriate and that staff are equipped to meet their specific needs.
- Improve the sixth form by:
  - providing effective information, advice and guidance to students so that they are enrolled on the right courses and that they complete them
  - ensuring that non-qualification activity is extended so that students' contribution to the academy is enhanced, along with their opportunities for personal development
  - ensuring that the achievement and outcomes of students on all courses are improved and are at least in line with national figures.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Tenacious and imaginative leadership from the Principal has resulted in what several staff described as the 'transformation' of the academy. He has driven necessary change at a rapid pace, but in a reflective manner, that has harnessed the commitment of the academy's community and led to a marked improvement in the academy's overall effectiveness.
- The senior leadership team is skilful and cohesive. Several of its members are relatively new to their roles and all have made a difference to the academy within their particular spheres. Senior leaders share the Principal's passion and energy. Their development and intelligent use of effective data systems across the academy mean that their understanding of its strengths and weaknesses is comprehensive and accurate. Together, they monitor every aspect of the academy's work and take well-informed decisions to secure improvement.
- The independent academy improvement partner has an integral role in the academy's development. His rigorous and frequent scrutiny provides leaders with an objective view of performance and ensures that their self-evaluation is accurate and focused.
- The mantra 'aim high; work hard; be nice; no excuses' is the backbone of the academy. Building on the sponsor's commitment to make a difference to the lives of all students, leaders adopt a 'tough love' approach; they expect maximum effort and high standards of conduct at all times and do all they can to help students overcome difficulties that may affect their learning.
- Enthusiastic leadership of strategies to improve students' behaviour has had a significant impact on reducing exclusion, improving attendance and developing a purposeful ethos.
- The leadership of teaching has raised most teachers' aspirations of what students can achieve. Effective coaching and support programmes, together with a new rigorous appraisal process, mean that teachers now have confidence that their strengths will be celebrated and that any underperformance will be recognised and addressed fairly. The quality of teaching across the academy is improving quickly.
- Middle leaders are now having a positive impact on teaching and learning. They are expected to 'live and breathe' their subjects and to be models of good practice. Their skills in analysing the performance of students and staff have improved markedly because they have been coached and supported to work in consistent ways. Leaders of technology and English are particularly effective in the ways in which they work with their departments to develop pedagogy. Leadership of mathematics has suffered from staffing changes over time which mean that the consistency found in some other subjects has not yet been embedded.
- The academy has improved its processes for the identification of students' special educational needs. The special education needs co-ordinator has worked hard to establish a clearer picture of students' achievement and the support they may require. However, the academy's target-setting for these students is underdeveloped.
- The academy provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders are aware of the need to ensure that academic rigour is strengthened to take the academy to the next stage on its trajectory of improvement. Schemes of work are being adapted to provide additional challenge for students.
- Students' formal learning is complemented by an exciting extra-curricular programme, compulsory for students at Key Stage 3, which includes activities that range from horse riding to gardening. The programme is very popular with students and encourages them to develop their own interests and talents.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly across the academy. The tutorial programme is well developed and provides opportunities for students to reflect on themselves, their community and global issues. They debate contentious news items and explore the responsibilities that living in a democracy entail. The academy encompasses students who have a variety of faiths; these are celebrated through the teaching of religious education and are widely respected.
- A zero-tolerance approach to discrimination is evident throughout the academy and its policies emphasise equality of opportunity. However, the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and their peers remains too wide. The impact of pupil premium funding has not yet resulted in enough improvement in achievement for those who are eligible for support. Year 7 catch-up funding has accelerated the progress of younger students within the academy who join with low attainment.
- Leaders ensure that the academy's safeguarding arrangements are understood and applied by all staff; these arrangements are effective. Leaders assiduously monitor the progress, attendance and behaviour of students attending the alternative provision.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- The sponsor and governors have a strong sense of moral purpose that underpins the academy's mission. Their skills and experience combine substantial business acumen with expertise in educational settings. Governors' work to improve the academy draws on their research into what makes organisations effective; consequently, they have expended considerable energy in developing both people and systems. The infrastructure they have put in place, in terms of leadership, processes and resources, gives the academy a sound base for future development.
- The governors are determined that Fulwood students deserve the very best teaching. They are committed to recruiting, developing and rewarding excellent leaders and teachers. From the reports provided by the academy's improvement partner, and from their first-hand visits to the academy, they have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and have developed a clear appraisal policy to ensure that pay awards are directly linked to students' progress.
- Governors have oversight of the spending of additional grants, such as the pupil premium. They recognise that this money has not closed attainment gaps with sufficient effect or rapidity. They are reconsidering their use of the money and have designated a governor with educational expertise to work with leaders on this aspect of the academy's work.
- Governors fulfil their statutory requirement to ensure that the academy is a safe, secure place.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Most students are polite, courteous and friendly. They behave sensibly and wear their uniform, which they helped to design, smartly. They play their part in keeping the academy building immaculate: completely free of litter or graffiti. Those who spoke with inspectors expressed their enthusiasm for the academy and were unanimous in the view that they are taught well and cared for well.
- The academy's records indicate that behaviour in lessons is typically good, but that there are occasions when a small minority of students do not meet the academy's high expectations of conduct. Leaders are aware of who these students are and they monitor their behaviour rigorously. There are fair sanctions for poor behaviour, as well as praise and recognition for those who behave well.
- Students' attendance has improved and is above the national average. Friendly competition is fostered through the house system; this includes attendance and students are eager not to let their houses down. Very few students are persistently absent.
- Students' attitudes to learning are positive. The academy has established high expectations regarding the completion and presentation of work and the vast majority of students comply with these. They value the comments from most of their teachers on their work and recognise that these have improved in depth and usefulness over the year. Students recognise and appreciate that many of their teachers 'go the extra mile'.
- Students contribute to the leadership of the academy. They respect opportunities to give their views about its development and are keen to be ambassadors.
- Students of different faiths and cultures get on well together. The academy's values bind them and the focus on finding people's similarities as well as celebrating their differences is a strength.
- Parents who responded to the academy's surveys and to Parent View largely consider behaviour at the academy to be good and well managed.

### Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Students who spoke with inspectors confirmed that they feel safe and that they are given good advice on how to take personal responsibility for their own well-being in different situations, including when they are on line.
- The behaviour and safety of students attending the off-site provision are good. The academy monitors their attendance closely and works in partnership with the other providers to address any concerns that relate to their students.
- The academy's safeguarding policy and procedures are kept under regular review and meet statutory requirements. Thorough checks are made on all staff employed at the academy. There is an effective induction policy for new staff which ensures that they are fully aware of the academy's expectations with regard to child protection. The building and its grounds are safe, secure and impeccably well-maintained.
- Students are adamant that bullying is very rare; they distinguish between bullying and 'falling out' and

think the academy has effective procedures to deal with both. They are clear that the academy does not tolerate any sort of racial or homophobic language, but say that sometimes 'gay' is used as a derogatory term by a few students out of teachers' earshot.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not been strong enough to ensure that all groups of students make good progress from their relative starting points. Although it has improved considerably since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching is not consistently good across subjects; consequently, some students, including higher attainers and the disadvantaged, underachieve in some subjects.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of students and do not provide them with sufficient challenge or make clear to them what the characteristics of top quality work are. Where teachers share excellent work with students, more productive learning is seen. This was the case in English where students, writing diary extracts based on their study of the suffragettes, considered an example produced by a class member and identified the techniques that he had used to write a compelling description.
- Students do not always complete sufficiently challenging work in mathematics. A lack of consistency and academic rigour has led to gaps in their understanding not being plugged effectively. Problem-solving skills are weak for some older students and the examples they are given to complete are sometimes too easy. Conversely, Year 7 students hypothesised enthusiastically about relationships between sequences of numbers and found ways of exploring these using algebra. They were challenged by the teacher to express these relationships in full sentences; they persevered and learned about 'conjecture', a concept that they had not understood previously.
- Teachers have worked hard to improve the quality of feedback they provide for pupils, including through marking. Most students respond assiduously to the additional prompts and questions that their teachers provide for them. Their exercise books demonstrate that their learning is improving because of this closer attention to detail. However, the policy is not applied with complete consistency. Most teachers identify students' spelling errors and expect them to correct these. The teaching of correct punctuation across the curriculum is less secure. Punctuation is taught in English but not re-enforced as a matter of routine in other subjects.
- There is evidence of some strong practice in teaching across subjects. In some subjects, such as English and technology, high quality is now the norm. In most subjects, there are some highly competent teachers whose skills are beginning to be shared to increasingly good effect because of strong and sensitive leadership.
- Teachers encourage students to consider moral and cultural themes during lessons. For example, in food studies, students discussed how different body images might affect teenagers' perceptions of themselves. In religious studies, the notion of 'sacrifice' was explored in relation to social justice and world religions. Students' knowledge of world affairs is being developed in humanities subjects and through the tutorial programme. Teachers are giving students a better range of opportunities to present and discuss their viewpoints, and to reflect on how they learn, such as in Spanish where students considered the best strategies for reading unfamiliar texts.
- Support staff work effectively with disabled students to encourage their participation and ensure that they have opportunities equal to those of their peers. Students at the early stages of speaking English are given effective individual support that helps their integration. Not all teachers are confident in how to meet the specific needs of students. The individual targets set for these students sometimes do not take into account their particular strengths and difficulties.
- Students are given plenty of opportunities to read for different purposes. The library is a vibrant hub of activity at the heart of the academy. The librarian is making a positive contribution to the academy's reading culture by developing a range of opportunities for students to enjoy reading, such as by completing a recent 'murder mystery' that involved solving book clues.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement is rising strongly across the academy and across subjects.
- Disadvantaged students do not achieve well enough. Disadvantaged students who took their GCSE examinations in 2014 attained results in English that were two thirds of a grade lower than their peers in the academy and almost a grade below other students nationally. In mathematics, the gap in achievement was even starker: disadvantaged students achieved two thirds of a grade lower than their peers in the

academy and nearly two grades lower than other students nationally. Middle-attaining disadvantaged students made below average progress in English, whereas in mathematics, underachievement was evident across groups. The academy's data indicate that attainment gaps are closing but continue to exist.

- Students' attainment was below the government's floor standards in 2014. Their progress was weakest in mathematics; furthermore, some students who attained GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics at grade C or better did not manage to achieve at this level in other subjects. Attainment was low in business studies, geography, history and information technology. The picture in 2014 was brighter in other respects. Students who took GCSE qualifications in religious studies and some science courses performed better than students nationally and results in technology subjects and dance were among the best in the academy.
- The academy's data relating to the achievement of students who are currently on roll indicates that progress is accelerating and attainment is rising. The academy's predictions of attainment for 2015 are encouraging and have been arrived at following robust moderation of students' work with colleagues from outstanding schools. The pattern of improvement is uneven, however. In English, rates of progress have risen and are likely to be above those found nationally, whereas in mathematics progress still lags behind the national average.
- The most-able students did not achieve well in 2014, particularly in mathematics. They are doing better now, largely because most teachers are making more effective use of the data they hold to plan work to meet students' needs effectively. However, there is still not enough academic rigour in some subjects to enable more students to attain the highest grades.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make variable progress. The academy's target-setting process for these students does not yet take full account of different sorts of specifics and how these may relate to expectations of achievement.
- Students' literacy skills are improving in response to a concerted focus on giving opportunities for them to provide more extended spoken and written explanations of their thinking. Students' spelling is improving too, but their punctuation is underdeveloped. Many students read regularly for pleasure, particularly in Key Stage 3.
- Students who attend off-site provision generally succeed on their courses. They gain skills that help them to progress to the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- The academy does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.

### The sixth form provision

### requires improvement

- The achievement of students in the sixth form requires improvement. In 2014, achievement was better for those students who studied vocational courses than for those who took academic subjects. At A level, students made relatively weak progress in subjects, including psychology, business studies, photography and English literature. Students' progress was better in history, chemistry and biology, although attainment in most subjects was below the national average. Cohort sizes for some subjects were very small, making comparative data less reliable. The picture at AS was brighter in terms of achievement in history and religious studies. The academy's data indicate improvement in 2015, with more students on track to attain higher grades.
- The recently appointed leader of the sixth form has made a difference in a short time and demonstrates good leadership. She has developed a robust improvement plan and has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve sixth form provision. Entrance criteria have now been established for students intending to enrol on different sixth form pathways. In the recent past, the lack of such criteria meant that students were recruited to inappropriate courses that had a negative impact on retention rates.
- Teaching in the sixth form requires improvement. As in the main academy, there is strong practice that is leading, for example, to a significant improvement in achievement in psychology. However, there is a need for more rigour so that students are well-prepared for higher education.
- Sixth formers behave well, appreciate the academy and have positive attitudes to learning. There are not enough opportunities for them to make a more significant contribution to academy life and leadership, or to pursue non-qualification activities in the community that will assist them in taking their next steps 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135936
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	456487

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

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	771
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	87
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Goldie
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Henry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 October 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 719060
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