

# North East Wolverhampton Academy

Marsh Lane, Fordhouses, Wolverhampton, WV10 6SE

**Inspection dates** 4–5 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- After two years of improving standards, achievement for students in Year 11 last year did not meet floor targets for English and mathematics.
- The most-able students have not made enough progress and boys have not achieved as well as girls.
- Teaching is not good in mathematics, business, geography and home economics. Standards in these subjects are below average.
- Teachers do not expect enough of students when setting homework.
- Students are sometimes given work that is too easy for them and, in some lessons, the more able are not expected to think hard enough.
- In some lessons, teachers do not check students' understanding closely enough before moving on to the next activity.
- Teachers of mathematics do not provide students with sufficient opportunities to tackle problems and explain their thinking.
- Subject leaders in English and mathematics do not provide teachers with enough opportunities to learn from their colleagues' examples of best practice.

### The school has the following strengths

- Exceptionally strong leadership by the principal means that current students' achievement is improving.
- Students attending alternative provision, lower attaining students in Year 7, disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Students' work is marked regularly and in detail. Teachers give clear advice about how to improve work and students say they value the opportunities to improve their work during lessons.
- The academy's work to keep students safe is good.
- Behaviour around the academy and in lessons is good and students say that this has improved in recent years.
- Extra-curricular opportunities, such as building an aeroplane together with the academy's 'Respect' values promote good opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 35 lessons or parts of lessons. Several lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors looked at students’ work in lessons and in a separate work sample.
- Inspectors spoke with students during lessons, at break times and at lunchtime. They also met with groups of students and listened to some students reading.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers responsible for subject areas.
- The lead inspector held discussions with the Chief Executive of the City of Wolverhampton Academy Trust, five members of the governing body and the academy’s Improvement Partner
- The 16 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, together with the academy’s survey of parents’ views of students in the sixth form. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in the 62 questionnaires returned by academy staff.
- Inspectors examined a number of documents, including the academy’s self-evaluation, records of behaviour and attendance, information on students’ current progress, and documentation relating to governance and safeguarding. Records of students attending off-site provision were considered during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Mary Myatt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Daniels	Additional Inspector
Julie Robinson	Additional Inspector
Michael Miller	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- North East Wolverhampton Academy is an average-sized secondary school. The academy is sponsored by the University of Wolverhampton, City of Wolverhampton College and Wolverhampton City Council.
- The academy moved into new premises in September 2014. Until then, teaching had taken place across two sites.
- The majority of students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is above average. These students come from a wide range of different ethnic groups.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- There are 17 students who follow part-time courses at the Orchard Centre, Midpoint, Braybrook and Nova Training Vocational Hub.
- The academy receives support from Heartlands High School and Education Central.
- The academy did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2014, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the teaching in mathematics and other subjects, including business, geography and home economics, so that students make at least the progress they should by ensuring that:
  - all teaching is pitched at the right level of difficulty and is sufficiently demanding for all groups of students, including the most able
  - all teachers make effective use of questions to check whether students have understood and to challenge them to think harder
  - homework tasks are suitably demanding and extend what students have learned in lessons.
- Ensure all students, in particular boys and the most able, reach expected standards in English and mathematics by:
  - Providing opportunities for teachers to learn from, and build upon, the good practice in those lessons which are pitched at the appropriate level to help all students to make good progress
  - providing more challenging problem-solving work in mathematics, and developing further the confidence of students to tackle unfamiliar mathematical questions and to fully explain the reasoning that lies behind their answers.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The principal has taken swift action to address the fall in standards in 2014. These were due in part to staff changes and Year 11 students being educated on two sites before the academy became established on a single site in September 2014. The principal is now well supported by all leaders and, as a result of increased monitoring of students' current progress and taking actions to address underachievement, the academy is improving quickly.
- The principal has managed exceptionally well significant changes in staffing since the previous inspection. These included changes to senior and middle leadership. All academy leaders have very high expectations to improve achievement, the quality of teaching and develop students' personal skills. Evidence of this was seen during the inspection where students were carefully taught those elements which they had not previously understood.
- Leaders' actions to improve the academy are tightly focused on ensuring that, where students are falling behind, teachers are held to account and additional support is provided where needed. The principal, together with leaders in the academy chain have taken account of detailed internal and external reviews to identify the reasons for the drop in standards in 2014. As a result, more teachers are now examiners so that their understanding of exam requirements is enhanced.
- Frequent checks on how well students are achieving are providing information about those areas which need improvement. Leaders are acting swiftly to make sure that underachievement is addressed through ensuring additional support for students both in the lesson and interventions are in place. The achievement of students currently in the school is improving.
- The quality of subject leadership has strengthened and is now good. Middle leaders work well together to improve standards. They do this through training, working with an outstanding school and informal meetings and discussions. However, leaders in English and mathematics have not provided their staff with enough opportunities to learn from the best teaching of their colleagues.
- Leaders correctly identified mathematics as requiring improvement. They are taking steps to make sure that students have more opportunities to solve problems in their lessons, but this has not yet had impact.
- Literacy across the curriculum is good because students are now producing more extended pieces of writing and most departments are ensuring that students are using technical language accurately. The English department has set the lead in providing opportunities for students to write accurately and at length.
- Leaders, particularly the academy's special educational needs team, have ensured that bespoke training occurs for teaching assistants. This means they have very good skills and are able to support students effectively. This is an example of the academy's good commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Rigorous appraisal ensures that the needs of all teachers are met through appropriate professional development. The principal uses a wide range of information to make decisions about teachers' progression up the salary scale, on the basis of reliable information about the impact of their teaching on students' learning over time.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged students. Additional in-class support for disadvantaged students in Years 7 and 8 is helping them to succeed. The academy has been successful in improving the attendance of disadvantaged students in Key Stage 4. This means that they are achieving well, particularly in English for students currently in the school.
- Leaders check well the achievement, attendance and safeguarding of students who attend off-site provision. They have improved the monitoring of the progress for these students, and, working closely with alternative providers, have made sure that achievement for these students has improved since the last inspection.

- The curriculum is well planned. Extra-curricular opportunities are exceptionally good in preparing students for life in modern Britain. The academy has strong links with engineering companies and is undertaking an ambitious project with Boeing to build a plane. As one student said, 'Who would have thought we would be building an aeroplane?' Students have increased confidence in their ability to take on challenging tasks and many spoke about how their presentation skills had improved as a result of talking to local business leaders and school leaders at a national conference.
- A well-rounded programme of assemblies, personal, social and health education (PSHE) mean that the academy promotes opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are many opportunities to explore British values through tutorials, assemblies and the student council's work on the academy's respect values. The academy has included sessions on extremism in its PSHE programme.
- Students benefit from good careers advice, which helps to inform their GCSE subject choices and plan their pathway into training, education and employment.
- There are very good relationships with the local primary schools. All pupils joining the academy are invited to a summer camp to help them become familiar with the buildings and staff. In addition, the academy involves primary children in a number of projects, including technology and sport.
- The academy works closely with parents. The parent support officer works with families to help them support their children. The parent forum, regular drop-in coffee mornings and a hotline mean that there are many opportunities for them to engage with the academy. Conversations with parents during the inspection showed that they value what the school is doing to make them feel welcome.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. All necessary checks on staff are carried out and maintained, supported by suitable training.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is good. The governing body has been restructured since the previous inspection. Governors have a clear view of how well students are doing compared with others nationally. They know where there are strengths in teaching and what needs improving. Governing body responsibilities are aligned with academy faculties and middle leaders say that they find that meetings with governors support them and make them think hard about where improvements are needed.
  - Governors take part in regular training to support their work. They have a clear oversight of the academy's finances, which are sound. They know about the impact of the pupil and Year 7 'catch up' funding.
  - Governors are rigorous in reviewing the performance of all staff, including the principal. They receive information about the performance of teachers and ensure that their salary progression is linked to performance.
  - Governors make sure that the academy's arrangements for keeping students safe and secure are implemented.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. Students move around the academy responsibly, showing courtesy to each other and to adults who work in the academy. No litter is left around the site and the buildings and grounds are immaculate. There is no sign of graffiti.
- Students have positive relationships among themselves and with members of staff. They spoke about the significant improvement in behaviour in recent years. Students say that staff are prepared to listen to their views.
- Students know what is expected of them. Younger students said that they had enjoyed working to develop the academy's five Respect values. Middle leaders said that these had had an impact on behaviour and had produced greater rigour and clarity.

- In most lessons, students are keen to learn. In some lessons, where they are either not clear about what they are expected to do, or where the work is too easy for them, they sometimes lose concentration.
- As a result of increased contact with parents and students, attendance is improving and is now approaching the national average.

### Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Procedures for safeguarding students are very effective. Staff have received training to identify students at risk and take immediate and decisive action should they believe any student might be in danger. The academy employs specialist staff including an educational psychologist, counsellor and parent support officer to support families and young people. There are effective links to outside agencies to support the most vulnerable students.
- Students say bullying is rare and that staff take any concerns seriously.
- Students know how to keep themselves safe. A programme of PSHE lessons, assemblies and tutorials ensures that they have relevant information about the dangers of using the internet and what to do if they are concerned about their safety. They also have opportunities to discuss discrimination and know that this is unacceptable.
- There are close checks on students who are following courses in alternative provision. These students have good attendance and are achieving well.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has not resulted in all students achieving as well as they might. As a result, students in Year 11 in 2014 did not make enough progress in a number of subjects including English, mathematics, business, home economics and geography.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics lessons requires improvement. This is because students are not always doing work that stretches them. The academy has recognised this and is increasing the number of activities which involve problem solving.
- Not all teachers check how well students have understood the tasks they are set. They do not always use questions to encourage students to think deeply about what they are learning, and this means that the students do not make enough progress.
- Information about how well students are achieving is checked regularly and students who are not doing as well as the might are given additional support. As result, teaching is better at addressing gaps in students' knowledge and understanding than in the past.
- Inspectors saw many lessons where students were making good progress, for example in English, history, performing art, photography and physical education. In these cases, teachers know the ability of their students well and plan activities which enable them to achieve well both academically and personally. In a physical education lesson, for example, students showed excellent attitudes to learning because the teacher posed problems about different strategies which they analysed before starting the activity. This meant students increased their understanding and were highly engaged.
- Many teachers have excellent subject knowledge and provide very clear explanations so that students achieve well. In history and chemistry lessons, for example, the teachers gave clear examples and checked that all students understood. As a result students were expected to use the correct technical language.
- All teachers understand the importance of literacy and most are using the academy's expectations for spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students now have more opportunities for extended writing and wider

reading across the curriculum.

- Students who need additional support with reading benefit from careful programmes which improve their literacy.
- Since the last inspection, the academy has focused on the quality of marking and feedback. This is having a positive impact on students' progress. Many examples were seen during the inspection where teachers are providing helpful comments which students use to improve their learning.
- Teaching assistants work effectively to help disabled students and those who have special educational needs to achieve well.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students join the academy at levels which are much lower than national. In 2014, the proportion of students achieving five GCSE A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, fell to well below average.
- Evidence from the inspection and analysis of the school's data show that the attainment of students currently in the academy is improving in most year groups. With the exception of 2014 the academy has been accurate in its predictions for students' attainment and progress. Improvement is most evident in English.
- Students are not making good enough progress in mathematics. While improving at Key Stage 3, progress for students is not reaching national expectations in Key Stage 4, as some teaching is still dealing with aspects which were not previously covered adequately due to poor teaching lower down the school.
- The school's data shows students in Year 11 are on track for improved performance in 2015. Inspection evidence from students' current work shows most students have made the progress they should during the current academic year.
- The most-able students do not make as much progress as similar students nationally. The academy has recognised this and additional challenge is now being included in many lessons.
- The progress of disadvantaged students requires improvement. The gap in attainment between disadvantaged and other students in the school narrowed last year. In English and mathematics, disadvantaged students were around half a grade behind their classmates. These students' grades were around a grade and a half below those of other students nationally in English and mathematics. For disadvantaged students currently in the academy the gaps are closing compared with their peers.
- Disabled students and those who have special education needs achieve well. Staff provide them with good guidance and make them work things out for themselves.
- Those students who have not reached the expected standards in English and mathematics by the end of primary school are achieving well. The 'catch-up' funding is used for extra support for them to practise their reading and to encourage them to read for pleasure. They also attend an after-school reading club with some of their parents.
- Achievement is good in performing arts, German, physical education, information, communication and technology, applied science, music, health and social care, and engineering. In these subjects, standards are often above average.
- Students have plenty of chances to develop their literacy, numeracy and communication skills in different contexts. This enables them to move confidently and successfully to the next stage of their education.

- The academy no longer enters students early for GCSEs.
- Students who attend alternative provision achieve well. Their behaviour and personal development is also good. This is because the courses they follow and pastoral support are successful in encouraging them to do well.

### **The sixth form provision is good**

- The sixth form is good and has improved since the last inspection. Students join the sixth form with attainment which is below average. Attainment by the end of Year 13 has risen in vocational and applied subjects. It is getting close to the national average because students make good progress in a range of subjects.
- Sixth-form students who follow vocational and applied subjects achieve well. They achieve particularly well in sport, engineering and photography. The academy's latest information indicates that most students are making good progress in A-level courses.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. In lessons observed, teachers had high levels of subject expertise and excellent knowledge of students' prior attainment. In a psychology lesson, the teacher used prior knowledge of students' misconceptions and skilfully questioned students about what they were learning. This challenge made them think hard and deepened their learning.
- Increasing numbers are entering the sixth form and an increasing proportion of students continue from Year 12 to Year 13. Most are successful in their applications for higher education courses, further training and employment opportunities. Students talked about how the academy has helped them to raise their aspirations, particularly in relation to applying to university.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of academic, applied and vocational courses. It has recently been reviewed and as a result, a greater proportion of students are continuing their studies from Year 12 to Year 13. An extensive enrichment programme, including the Duke of Edinburgh Award, sports leaders programme and advice on apprenticeships and university applications mean that students are able to develop their personal and academic skills.
- Programmes for students entering Year 12 without good qualifications in English and/or mathematics are appropriate. The academy's information shows that all students leave the sixth form with at least a GCSE C grade in English and a high proportion achieve this grade in mathematics.
- Good leadership is making sure that systems to check students' achievement are used by all teachers. Any students falling behind are quickly identified and appropriate action is taken to improve their performance. All students have regular meetings with academic mentors and this helps to keep them on track.
- Students are positive about the quality of careers information and guidance they receive. They have opportunities for work experience with local companies in manufacturing, banking and business, and have access to the library at the University of Wolverhampton. Combined with interview training, they are well prepared for future training and employment.
- Attitudes to learning are good. These are enhanced by the fact that students have many opportunities to contribute to the life of the academy. The sixth form steering group organises events including local and national experiences and celebration events and students say they enjoy taking part in these. All students in the sixth form have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills through participating in sporting and cultural events, community service, engaging in work experience and working alongside academy staff supporting younger students.
- Students in the sixth form are aware of the misuse of social media and are helped to understand the risks and consequences of extremism. They regularly lead assemblies on these and other aspects of the academy's 'Respect' values.



- Sixth-form outcomes meet the national 16 to 19 interim minimum standards.

## 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>	136182
<b>Local authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	462533

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 sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<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>	980
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	292
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Pymm
<b>Principal</b>	Bal Pierpoint
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 June 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 623111
<b>Fax number</b>	01902 623111
<b>Email address</b>	info@newacademy.org.uk

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