

Wellacre Technology Academy

Irlam Road, Flixton, Manchester, M41 6AP

Inspection dates 20–21 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Require improvement	3
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

- From their starting points, students do not make good progress in most subjects during their time in school.
- The standards of attainment students reach in different subjects are not always in line with what is expected of them for their age. The proportion of students reaching the higher grades is lower than that seen nationally.
- Students' numeracy skills in Key Stage 3 are not good and impact adversely on the progress they make in mathematics in Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Teaching does not always ensure that students make good progress and reach high levels of attainment.
- Teachers do not always check on students' understanding and, as a result, activities do not meet students' needs well. Teachers do not give accurate feedback on students' written work.
- Some students do not always conduct themselves well during lessons and around school.
- Students do not always show positive attitudes to learning. This is seen in the presentation of their work and where work is incomplete.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not ensured that teaching has continued to be of a good quality and impacting well on students' achievement.
- The training provided by leaders for staff is not having a consistently strong impact. Some staff do not have high enough expectations of what students can do and do not consistently adhere to agreed policies.
- Senior leaders' work with middle leaders has not always had a strong enough impact. As a result, middle leadership requires further improvement.
- Governors' challenging of leaders on the quality of teaching or students' achievement has not been robust enough.
- The sixth form provision is not fully effective and requires further improvement. Students do not achieve well across different subjects and teaching quality is too variable.

The school has the following strengths

- Students attend well and leaders in this area have made effective changes to ensure that attendance has improved.
- Leaders have worked effectively with parents and students to improve punctuality.
- Students are safe and feel safe in school.
- Leaders have introduced a tighter system of appraisal for teachers, which has eliminated inadequate teaching.
- The achievement and teaching of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of part-lessons, eight of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Some of the students' work was scrutinised jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors observed and spoke with students during lessons and at break times. They also met formally with groups of students from Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. In addition, an inspector met with some members of the school council. The team also observed tutorial sessions.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders. Meetings were also held with members of the governing body and the school's support partner.
- Inspectors observed the school's work to monitor teaching and looked at case studies of certain students' needs and students' work in their books. They also reviewed a range of documents, including the school's arrangements and policies for safeguarding, performance management procedures and the students' attendance data. Inspectors also looked at information about students' progress and attainment.
- There were 137 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) which were used to help inspectors gauge the views of parents. Inspectors also considered the school's survey of parents' views over the past academic year. Forty-one staff at the academy responded to a staff questionnaire, the outcomes of which were considered by the inspectors.

Inspection team

Fiona McNally, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anne McAvan	Additional Inspector
Alan Parkinson	Additional Inspector
Stephen Wall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized secondary school.
- The majority of students are White British boys, but a small number of girls attend the sixth form.
- There is a slightly smaller proportion of disadvantaged students, those supported through the pupil premium, than seen nationally. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special education needs is above the national average.
- A number of students attend two alternative provision settings on a part-time basis. One setting supports students with medical needs, through the Medical Education Service at the Vulnerable Pupil Referral Unit. Another setting supports students with their behaviour needs, through the Local Authority Activity Engagement programme at the Pupil Referral Unit.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to good in order to raise the achievement of students in all key stages, including the sixth form, by:
 - regularly checking on students' understanding so that activities match their needs closely
 - giving students regular and specific feedback to help them make improvements in their work
 - improving students' numeracy skills, especially in Key Stage 3.
- Improve the behaviour of students by ensuring that:
 - staff apply the school's procedures consistently well
 - disruption in lessons is tackled effectively
 - students are always ready to learn when they arrive to lessons.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management, including governors, by:
 - ensuring that the checks of teaching quality and students' achievement are accurate and thorough to support further improvements in these areas
 - ensuring that the impact of training is regularly reviewed so that improvements can be made, as necessary
 - having higher expectations of the students' capacity to do well.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on 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

require improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the overall achievement of students has declined due to teaching which is not consistently good. This meant that achievement in 2014 for Year 11 students leaving the school was inadequate. However, leaders have been aware of these issues and, recently, improvements have been made to teaching. Initially, this has meant that there is no teaching which is now inadequate. However, teaching and achievement still require further improvement and leaders' work to make improvements has not always been consistently strong.
- The school's evaluation of its provision is full and detailed. However, while leaders are aware that the achievement of students and the quality of teaching require further improvement, they have an overgenerous view of students' behaviour and of leaders' impact on some areas of the provision.
- The system to appraise teachers is good and has been strengthened in recent years. This has led to teachers, as well as teaching assistants, being made more accountable. In the first instance, this has meant there is no inadequate teaching. It has also identified where teaching requires improvement. Where teaching has not led to students performing well, leaders and governors have ensured that staff do not receive pay progression.
- The checking on teaching has not always been rigorous enough. While teaching that is not good enough has been recognised by senior leaders, the specific reasons for weaker teaching have not always been fully understood. As a result, the regular training events in place are not consistently having a strong enough impact to allow all teachers to make the necessary improvements to their classroom practice. As a result, teaching does not always meet students' needs closely enough and achievement requires improvement.
- Leaders cannot always accurately identify where certain teaching strategies are carried out consistently well. For example, leaders are too optimistic about the quality of marking and feedback. Checking of students' work is not regular enough and, where feedback is apparent, it is not always useful. Students are unable to use it to improve their work. This is not fully understood by leaders, who identify this as a strength for most teachers.
- Middle leaders have had a more prominent role in recent years. Some can demonstrate the strong impact of their work on the achievement of students in their area. However, senior leaders have not ensured that middle leaders have a clear understanding of how to check on the quality of teaching. As a result, some middle leaders are too generous about the quality of teaching in their subject area and, therefore, cannot support improvements, as necessary. Furthermore, there is some confusion among middle leaders about how targets are set. This means that data records are not analysed accurately by leaders and underachievement is not identified in a timely manner.
- The leadership of students who have special educational needs or who are disabled is good. Leaders work effectively with teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that these students' specific needs are clearly understood and that teaching matches their needs well. As a result, these students make good progress.
- The leadership of the provision for students who are disadvantaged is not good enough. The impact of the pupil premium funding has not been consistently good for these students. While the impact of strategies to support these students has improved recently, their achievement requires further improvement. As a result, the school's use of pupil premium funding is not fully effective.
- Senior leaders have not communicated high enough expectations to staff and, as a result, staff do not adhere to school policies consistently. This is made evident through teachers who do not apply the marking and feedback policy correctly or who do not follow procedures to manage behaviour. Staff questioned about this felt that the training for staff was not always good enough to help them make improvements. Some staff do adhere to policies rigorously and the strength of the systems is evidenced by the strong impact these staff have on students' good behaviour and achievement.
- The assessment of students' attainment and progress is regular. However, it is not always used well by leaders and teachers as there are not consistent improvements in students' achievement over time.
- The leadership of some areas of behaviour is strong and improving. This is seen by the positive impact leaders have had on the students' attendance and punctuality to school, which have both improved well in recent years. In addition, leaders have worked well with families where students were persistently absent and these students are now in school on a regular basis.
- However, leaders have not ensured that systems and procedures are working consistently, for example in relation to the management of behaviour. Not all staff, students and parents view behaviour as good or believe that behaviour is managed well by leaders. This is reflected in the behaviour observed during the inspection and in the records the school holds about students' behaviour over time.

- The school is striving to promote equal opportunities for students. Leaders ensure that different events, as well as a specific programme called RESPECT, foster positive relationships between different groups of students. There is very little discrimination; when this does occur, leaders deal with it effectively and quickly. As a result, students do not repeat these types of offences and have learnt that discrimination is not tolerated.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced with some particular strengths. The work of the RESPECT programme educates the students very well around a wealth of topics that are relevant to them. Students speak very highly of the programme, describing it as relevant and engaging. They report that they learn about how to ensure that they keep safe and how to ensure that they will be well-informed citizens of the future. This is further supported by other events that enhance the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students who attend the alternative providers are monitored closely. As a result, their particular needs are being met well. Their attendance at both the alternative providers and at school is good. In addition, they are making good progress, due to leaders' close supervision and good understanding of how students need to be supported to overcome barriers to learning.
- Students have a variety of opportunities to ensure that they understand about life experiences beyond their own. In particular, the headteacher and other leaders have ensured there are much better relationships between students in the school and members of the local community.
- As a result of doing good works in the community, such as helping the elderly, students now have a positive reputation in the community. The students can talk at length about why this has been important, as they are now more aware of how their actions impact on others. This ties in with the school's work to ensure that students receive good information, advice and guidance about future pathways. In these ways, the students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school accesses support from the local authority, which works regularly with the school. The local authority has an overgenerous view of the school's provision. It is aware of improvements that need to be made in achievement and teaching, but accepts the school's view around behaviour and leadership, which is too optimistic. Because of this, the local authority is not challenging the school strongly enough.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school has not had a consistently strong impact. Governors, like leaders in the school, have an overly generous view of the behaviour of students and the strength of the different levels of leadership. As a result, their challenging of leaders has not been robust enough and has not led to strong enough improvements in the quality of teaching and achievement.
 - The governors are aware that the school receives funding for disadvantaged students, but have not ensured that it is used effectively.
 - The governors have supported leaders in school to improve the appraisal system. This has increased the accountability of teachers and has led to the elimination of inadequate teaching in the school.
 - The governors ensure that the financial management of the school is secure.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Students' conduct around school is not consistently good. This is shown by the school's own records of behaviour incidents. The number of students being excluded or isolated for poor behaviour was much higher 12 months ago than it is now and these numbers have been reduced significantly. However, the number of behavioural incidents is still high and the number of exclusions is still above the national average.
- Disruption in class is not rare and in some areas can be quite frequent. This was evident where learning was observed, from the school's records and from discussions with students.
- Leaders' work to improve attendance has been very effective. Attendance has consistently risen and been above average in recent years. This reflects the strong work by leaders with particular families to ensure that there are far fewer students who are regularly absent.
- Some teachers correctly apply the school's behaviour system to warn students if they behave poorly; they follow the procedures to apply sanctions where behaviour is not good enough. Where this is in place in classes, students' behaviour is good and they respond positively to staff, doing as they are told immediately. However, too many teachers do not apply the system properly and students report that there is not consistency in the management of behaviour. Some staff and parents also report this.
- The behaviour of students who are at alternative providers on either a full- or part-time basis has improved considerably, due to leaders' close consideration of their needs. They also attend well and are

punctual to school and the alternative provision.

- Students are very proud of their school and are ambitious for its future. This is seen by the opportunities some students have to shape key changes to school life, such as the imminent change to the school uniform and crest, which students have helped to design. Most students are aware that improvements are needed and believe that leaders will ensure that these improvements will be made.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The school works hard to ensure that students are safe at all times and students report that they feel safe. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are safe at the school.
- The school ensures that there is good and regular training for child protection in place for all members of staff. It also ensures that staff who have particular responsibility for students' safety and safeguarding are very highly trained.
- The school has developed a programme to support students' needs beyond the academic. The RESPECT programme supports students' learning in many areas, not least in keeping themselves safe in variety of ways. Students report that this programme is very useful and pertinent to their needs as young people.
- Students are fully aware of different forms of bullying, including prejudiced-based and cyber-bullying. Through the RESPECT programme, delivered to all students on a weekly basis, and through various other events in assembly, students understand how to keep themselves safe while using the internet and what to do if they do not feel safe. The topics relating to students' tolerance of different lifestyles and beliefs are helping the students to understand the importance of respect for all. Students report that bullying is rare and dealt with well by staff when it does occur.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not strong enough and, as a result, not enough students are making good progress or reaching higher levels of attainment. This is the case in various subjects across the curriculum, including English, mathematics, humanities, science and languages.
- Too often, teachers do not make regular checks of students' progress and understanding. As a result, teachers plan lessons without close consideration of students' needs. This means that work can be too easy for the most able students. It can also mean that learning is not accessible for some groups of students.
- Teachers do not always check on students' work in their books. At times, marking is completed but does not always identify errors in students' work. Equally, teachers can give students feedback that is too vague and which students cannot respond to easily. As a result, students do not make regular improvements to their work and their progress over time slows.
- In some areas of the curriculum, teaching is consistently good. This is seen, for example, in art, photography and construction. Students in these subjects make good progress over time. The checking of their work and understanding is regular and teachers offer strong feedback, which students use to make improvements. The regular checking also means that teachers are quickly aware of students' misconceptions and use the information to adjust activities, so that they always meet students' needs closely.
- In those areas of the curriculum where teaching is good, the questioning of students is effective and ensures that students are given regular opportunities to give full responses. Teachers are skilful in drawing students into discussion and in insisting that they use ambitious language, including the key terminology for the topic. This helps to deepen students' understanding and more rapid progress is made. However, this is not always the case. At times, teachers do not offer students the chance to answer questions regularly and do not ensure that, where responses are given, students give full and articulate answers. This means there is not enough of a focus on teaching students valuable communication skills. This is another example of teachers not always making the most of chances to check on students' understanding.
- The teaching of literacy has been a focus since the previous inspection. All Key Stage 3 students, as well as some Key Stage 4 students, read for a session on a daily basis. The school has checked on the impact of this focused support and students' reading ages have risen. However, the impact on students' wider literacy skills is not yet consistently strong. Too often, students use inaccurate spelling, punctuation and grammar in their written work across different subjects and these errors are not identified and addressed by teachers consistently. The literacy skills of students in religious education are consistently good.
- The teaching of numeracy requires improvement. Students' numeracy skills, especially in Key Stage 3, are not always good enough. This means there are too many gaps in students' learning when they reach Key

Stage 4 and time is needed to address these gaps. This can slow progress over time and, as a result, students' achievement in mathematics is not good enough.

- Teachers can create a positive climate for learning. Where this is the case, all groups of students are fully engaged in their learning. They understand that there are high expectations of them and rise to the challenge. They complete all their work and respond to teachers' instructions and advice to make improvements.
- However, this is not always the case. Too often, teachers do not plan activities which engage students and do not communicate high expectations. As a result, students can be disengaged or even disrespectful to teachers. They do not always complete work or do not do their best to make improvements to their work.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- From their individual starting points, students' progress is not rapid in most subject areas, including English, mathematics, science, humanities, languages and physical education. This is the case for different groups of students, including disadvantaged students.
- The progress of students in English in Key Stage 4 has started to improve recently, but the achievement of students in English in Key Stage 3 is not consistently good.
- Students are not given the chance to reach the higher standards of attainment and, as a result, few do. In addition, the attainment of students, while rising, has been below average in recent years. Too few students reach the higher levels of attainment. Some improvements have been seen in the attainment and progress of the most able students recently. However, a lower-than-average proportion of these students make good progress or reach the higher grades at GCSE.
- Since the previous inspection, students' achievement has declined. In 2014, those leaving Year 11 had made inadequate progress in several subject areas, including mathematics. This has been improved for those currently in the school. However, the progress of many students still requires further improvement.
- The gaps between different groups of students' attainment and progress are not closing consistently. However, while both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students from last year's Year 11 made inadequate progress during their time at school, this is no longer the case. The attainment and progress of both groups of students have improved, although they require further improvement.
- The attainment of students who are disadvantaged requires improvement. In 2014, disadvantaged students attained less than a quarter of a GCSE grade lower in both English and mathematics in comparison to their classmates and about two thirds of a grade less compared with other students nationally. For students currently in Year 11, non-disadvantaged students' attainment has increased more rapidly than that of disadvantaged students. Therefore, the gap between these two groups has widened compared to the gap seen in 2014. However, in other year groups, the achievement gaps are beginning to close.
- Gaps in the progress that disadvantaged students make, compared to other students in the school and compared to all students nationally, are also beginning to narrow for students in Years 7 to 10. In English, improvements have been the most rapid in Key Stage 4. However, this is not consistently the case in Key Stage 3.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good. Their needs are being met well through careful consideration of the subjects they take and the intervention programmes used where underachievement is apparent.
- The achievement of the most able students is not good. Too few of these students reach the higher levels of attainment, as they should, and their progress over time is not rapid enough. The expectations of these students are not high enough, meaning that work lacks challenge. This can lead to these students becoming disengaged in lessons.
- The school no longer enters students early for GCSE examinations.
- Students who attend other providers for part or all of their curriculum do well. Their needs are being met well by the providers because the courses suit their needs. This is supported well by leaders, who understand what will help these students make improvements and liaise regularly with the alternative providers. As a result, these students are making good progress because they attend school and the alternative provision very regularly.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- After the previous inspection, the effectiveness of the sixth form declined. Improvements over the past 18

months have resulted in more students making good progress in certain subjects, such as in the Level 3 engineering and physical education diplomas. However, students' achievement is not yet consistently good across different subject areas.

- Teaching in the sixth form is too variable and this impacts adversely on students' achievement. In some areas, teaching is consistently good and this is reflected in the work of students, which is regularly checked by teachers, and students respond positively. However, this is not always the case and, where checking is irregular, students' misconceptions are not clearly enough understood. As a result, activities do not match their needs and their progress slows.
- Students speak very positively about the provision. Leaders have made significant changes to the curriculum offer, to ensure that it serves the purposes of these students who choose the sixth form. Students are happy with these changes, believing it focuses the sixth form on fewer subjects and that this is why improvements are being seen.
- Students have good attitudes to learning and respond well to teachers' instructions and feedback, when it is given. Attendance of students has improved well in recent months. From a very low level, students' attendance has improved by eight per cent in the last three years. This is due to effective work by leaders with students to communicate high expectations around attendance. As a result, students report they are much more aware of the need to be in their lessons on a very regular basis.
- Students receive strong provision to support their personal development. This includes information to help them make financial decisions when they move on to university or training. They also benefit from the RESPECT programme, which helps them to understand how to keep themselves safe and to understand the need for tolerance and respect for people from different backgrounds or whose lifestyles or choices are different from their own. This ensures that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders' work to address the decline in teaching and achievement that occurred after the previous inspection is beginning to have a positive impact. However, while improvements in both these areas have occurred, achievement and teaching are not yet good in all subjects. Leaders have been successful in improving students' attendance and have recently ensured that more suitable subjects and pathways are offered to students; this has had a positive impact on students' attitudes to 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

Unique reference number	136378
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	461928

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	831
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Johnson
Headteacher	Melanie Wicks
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2012
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