

The Ridings Federation Yate International Academy

Sunridge Park, Yate, South Gloucestershire BS37 4DX

Inspection dates

7–8 October 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Achievement in the secondary phase in mathematics, in the sixth form and for disadvantaged pupils requires improvement.
- Many of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection have not been resolved.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, and their behaviour, sometimes get in the way of learning in lessons in the secondary phase. Not all staff are yet making a strong contribution to tackling this.
- Teaching and the curriculum are not yet consistently good across the academy. Not all teaching challenges the most-able pupils.
- Teaching in the secondary phase does not help pupils to develop a good understanding of the mathematics they learn.
- In the secondary phase, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development requires improvement. Teachers do not all use tutorial time effectively. The quality of advice and guidance for pupils has only recently been improved.
- Achievement and teaching in the sixth form require improvement. Students are not yet developing good study skills.
- The actions leaders have taken have not yet had significant impact on the key weaknesses affecting the academy in the secondary phase. Plans for improving the impact of governance are very new.
- Leaders have not fully convinced the academy community, including parents, of the reasons for the actions they have taken.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in early years get off to a very good start. This good learning is sustained right through the primary phase.
- Leaders in the primary phase have maintained the good quality of provision from the last inspection.
- Pupils' achievement in English is good throughout the academy. Pupils in the primary phase are taught to read well and confidently.
- Pupils' behaviour in the primary phase is good. They are helped to become confident learners and are well prepared for the secondary phase.
- Leaders have an accurate view of what needs to be done to improve the academy. There are signs that their actions are beginning to have an impact, including on pupils' punctuality and the smartness of their uniforms.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in mathematics, particularly for disadvantaged pupils in the secondary phase, by:
 - making sure that teaching and the curriculum in mathematics are consistently effective in developing pupils' deeper understanding of the mathematics they learn.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that it is at least good and more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment information to plan lessons that challenge all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able
 - making sure expectations of the way pupils present and complete their work are consistently high, particularly in the secondary phase.
- In the secondary phase, improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and their attitudes to learning by:
 - making sure that all staff have consistently high expectations and play a full part in ensuring and maintaining pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to learning
 - making more effective use of tutorial time to contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management in the secondary phase, and of governance, by:
 - following through rigorously on current plans and recent actions, and taking swift action where improvement does not follow rapidly enough
 - tackling the weaknesses in the sixth form, including by improving the impact of checks on teaching, the use of assessment and the development of students' skills for life and learning
 - continuing to work with the academy community, including parents, to fully explain the reasons for actions taken and the impact these actions are having.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- In the period following the last inspection, there were important changes to leadership at the academy. A number of new initiatives have been put in place, in particular to address weaknesses in pupils' behaviour, in their pride in the academy uniform and their punctuality. Not all of these changes have been clearly explained to the wider school community and this has resulted in some parental unease and dissatisfaction. Leaders at the academy are working hard to engage the community in understanding the rationale for the changes made.
- The need for change is clear. For some time, teaching, achievement and behaviour at the academy, in the secondary phase, have not been good enough. Current leaders have accurately identified the key weaknesses and are taking steps to address them. However, many of the plans in place, and actions taken, are very new and it is too soon to see significant impact. Although leaders have prioritised improvements to pupils' behaviour, their evaluation of the impact of behaviour in the secondary phase is sometimes too positive.
- There has been improvement in some areas of the academy's work, including in how smartly pupils wear their uniforms and in their punctuality. Much has also been done to design and implement new structures and processes. In addition, important aspects of the academy's work, such as achievement in English and the effectiveness of the primary phase and the early years provision, have been maintained. However, there remains more to do before the academy is securely good. As a result, the capacity of current leaders in the secondary phase to bring about significant and sustained improvement is, as yet, not fully proven.
- On the whole, middle leaders are strongly supportive of the changes being made, and new leadership posts have been created to coordinate work in subject groupings across the federation. Middle leaders recognise they have a key role in driving improvements to teaching. For example, leaders in mathematics are beginning to address important weaknesses in the curriculum, and in teaching and learning in mathematics in the secondary phase.
- Leadership in the primary phase is good. The principal has established a strong, cohesive team and morale is high. Working with existing leaders, she has further raised expectations and improved the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. The progress of individual children, including those supported through the pupil premium, is carefully tracked and prompt action taken where needed.
- In the secondary phase, leaders are developing a revised approach for staff appraisal and for checking and improving the quality of teaching. While the current emphasis is on the implementation of new classroom and marking expectations, it is too early to see improvements to the overall quality of teaching.
- A new model for curriculum and assessment has been established, comprising a modular approach based on six-week blocks of teaching, across the secondary phase. While leaders believe this will provide greater structure and impact from assessment, they recognise that the quality of the curriculum will also need to improve in order to support better learning. It is too soon for leaders to have checked closely the impact of changes made to the curriculum on pupils' achievement in the secondary phase.
- Pupil premium funding has been used to support a range of initiatives across the academy. The overall impact of this funding is greatest in English, and current plans include ensuring a stronger focus on support for disadvantaged students in mathematics. However, in the secondary phase, the lack of a detailed evaluation of the impact of these initiatives limits leaders' ability to identify the most successful strategies.
- The PE and sport premium funding is deployed effectively. Increasing numbers of primary pupils are involved in sports leadership programmes and the skills of staff in the primary phase have improved through regular coaching and training opportunities alongside specialist sports teachers.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development requires improvement, although it is stronger in the primary phase. In the secondary phase, new plans for cross-curricular 'collapse' days are intended to strengthen provision, although these are yet to be fully implemented. Inconsistencies in the use of tutorial time is a further weakness, although a range of extra-curricular opportunities, including through trips and visits, do make a positive contribution to pupils' experiences. Few of the classrooms and public spaces around the secondary phase of the academy have displays or examples of pupils' work. By contrast, the environment in the primary phase is rich and vibrant.

■ The governance of the school

- Until recently, governance was arranged through a scheme of delegation involving an overarching trust board and local governing bodies for each of the academies in the federation. Governors (known as trustees) accept that they have not always challenged academy leaders effectively under these arrangements. They say they were too willing to accept the assurances and explanations provided by leaders, and did not check rigorously on what they were being told. In some cases, trustees were too accepting of weak levels of achievement, or were influenced by levels of aspiration for pupils at the academy that were too low. Trustees have reorganised these arrangements to create a single trust board, providing governance for both academies in the federation. In this way, trustees hope they will be better able to provide better challenge and scrutiny, and to draw on a wider range of experience and expertise of trustees involved with both academies. These plans are very new, however, and it is much too soon to be sure that these new arrangements will be fully effective.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and trustees have ensured that safeguarding requirements, such as safe recruitment and records of staff suitability, are fully in place. Staff have received appropriate training, although work to raise awareness of issues of radicalisation and extremism have yet to be fully implemented. Trustees have not been able to ensure that the academy's public website contains the full range of appropriate policy documents, or that those available are fully up to date. This is due to access limitations to the academy website, maintained through a third-party arrangement. The practice of staff is secure, however, because guidance is available on the academy's internal intranet. Work with key stakeholders, including parents and the local authority, is prompt and effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. Leaders have not done enough to ensure that more teaching is of good quality, particularly in the secondary phase. As a result, the variation in the quality of teaching, seen at the last inspection, persists.
- Not all teaching has high enough expectations of how pupils will present their work, try hard and respond to feedback. Although leaders are raising their expectations of teaching, not all teachers at the academy are playing a full part in a more consistent approach to raising standards. In too many lessons in the secondary phase, weak behaviour is a barrier to good learning.
- In mathematics, much teaching in the secondary phase concentrates on helping pupils to learn rules and techniques for the topics they cover. However, this is not always successful in deepening pupils' understanding or building their problem-solving skills. For example, although many pupils knew that they could find two thirds of 66 by 'dividing by three and multiplying by two', they were much less clear about why this worked or how to remember, apply or adapt it.
- In reviewing the curriculum, leaders have placed a high priority on using assessment to support learning. Although inspectors found that the use of assessment is beginning to have a greater impact on learning, too much teaching remains that does not help all pupils to make faster progress, including the most able. This is because some teaching does not use information about what pupils already know and can do to help pupils to move on to new learning, or to back-track, consolidate and receive support.
- In early years and in the primary phase, routines and expectations are clear. This supports good learning and helps pupils to develop positive attitudes to their work and to each other. Pupils cooperate and work well together and with their teachers. In the secondary phase, while relationships are usually warm and supportive, they are not always purposeful and productive enough. In the sixth form, teaching and private study time do not always help students to take greater responsibility for, or to develop, effective study skills.
- The teaching of reading is strongest in the primary phase. A systematic approach to developing reading through early years and Key Stage 1 helps the youngest readers to develop a love of books. A focus on reading regularly at school and at home helps pupils to develop their skills and to improve their vocabulary for writing. Teaching in English in the secondary phase is typically effective in helping most pupils to make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Support for pupils' personal development is in need of improvement. Very little use is made of morning tutor time in the secondary phase to develop a planned programme for pupils. Some pupils' understanding of wider contemporary issues is weak.
- Until very recently, the provision for careers education, advice and guidance was poor, including in the sixth form. Too little has been done to help inspire or inform pupils about the alternatives and choices open to them. Leaders have recognised this weakness and a new, more coherent and planned approach is now in place, although it is too early to judge its impact.
- Not all pupils understand their responsibilities well or respect themselves, others or the school site. For example, although the school building is clean and tidy, some pupils are careless and drop litter elsewhere. In the secondary phase, the occasional boisterousness of some older pupils at social times and between lessons makes some younger pupils feel anxious. A very small minority of pupils have been caught smoking in the academy grounds; leaders have taken firm action in response, including through the use of fixed-term exclusion from the academy.
- Pupils say they feel safe in the academy and that staff will help them with any anxieties or concerns they may have. They understand about different types of bullying, the potential risks from social media or the internet, and the impact of discriminatory language or behaviour.
- For a few pupils, the work of the inclusion centre is very helpful in providing support for issues that may be affecting them inside the academy, at home or with their peer group. Pupils welcome the care that helps them to manage their feelings and worries.
- In the primary phase, the nurture provision is especially effective in developing pupils' readiness to learn. Through targeted speech, language and play development programmes, pupils make accelerated progress following the support they receive.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Occasionally in the secondary phase, pupils' behaviour and attitudes get in the way of learning. Sometimes, leaders are called to lessons because the behaviour of a small number of pupils causes disruption. These 'on-call' incidents have risen over recent months.
- In part, this is due to leaders' refusal to accept lower standards of behaviour. This is also seen in the recent improvements to pupils' uniform standards and punctuality to lessons. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, at the moment, some pupils do not always respond well to expectations in class.
- Despite leaders' determination to tackle behaviour that falls below their expectations, not all staff at the academy are taking enough responsibility for supporting improvements to behaviour. Sometimes, poor behaviour is ignored or staff are not visible enough on corridors and in open spaces.
- Leaders keep detailed records of 'on-call' and other incidents, including exclusions. However, leaders' analysis of this information is not yet having enough impact in supporting improvements to pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils' behaviour in the primary phase, including in early years, is good. The academy has ensured that pupils acquire an understanding of how to learn. Even the youngest pupils are challenged to 'have a go' and 'keep on trying'. This systematic approach to developing positive behaviours, like resilience, means pupils can explain clearly how to be a successful learner.
- Overall attendance is above average. However, levels of absence and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils in the secondary phase are too high. In the primary phase, more effective action is taken to address issues of poor attendance, including through working with pupils' families.

Outcomes for pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection. Many of the weaknesses at that time remain and, in the secondary phase, pupils' behaviour sometimes gets in the way of learning. Pupils say it is frustrating when some of their lessons are interrupted by the behaviour of other pupils.
- In the secondary phase, achievement in mathematics continues to require improvement, as too many pupils do not learn well. The overall attainment of disadvantaged pupils by the end of Key Stage 4 could be higher and the most-able pupils are not always pushed enough to reach the highest grades, at GCSE or in the sixth form, across a wide range of subjects.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and by those with special educational needs is in line with that of other pupils, in both phases. It is better in the primary phase because teachers and other adults pay close attention to pupils' needs. This is much less the case in the secondary phase, where leaders do not yet consider how levels of achievement may be affected by pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- The most-able pupils across the academy could do better, including some disadvantaged pupils in the primary phase. There is not enough challenge in teaching or the curriculum in the secondary phase to help pupils to reach these higher standards. For example, very few pupils have gained A* grades at GCSE in each of the last two years.
- In early years, there is a good focus on building children's understanding of number and this continues into the primary phase. However, in the secondary phase, learning slows because pupils do not continue to develop a good understanding of the mathematics they learn. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils in mathematics in the secondary phase is lower than in English.
- In the primary phase, many pupils are confident readers. Younger pupils build the skills they need quickly and securely because of the quality of the help they get, right from the early years. Older children in Key Stage 2 read fluently and with expression, and with a good understanding of the text. In the secondary phase, there is too little focus on building systematically on these skills for older pupils.
- Literacy is a strong focus in the primary phase and pupils make good progress in the quality of their writing and handwriting. However, in the secondary phase, there is not enough attention paid to maintaining neat presentation and pupils' pride in their work in all their lessons. Teachers' expectations of how pupils will present their work varies considerably.
- In English, pupils make good progress across the academy. In the secondary phase, disadvantaged pupils achieve well in English and, in 2015, more boys than girls made expected progress in English by the end of Key Stage 4, a reverse of the national trend. This is because there is a strong focus on developing good attitudes to learning in English. Assessment is also used well to help pupils to understand how they can improve their work.
- The great majority of pupils supported through the work of the hearing impairment unit make rapid progress. Although some pupils start with skills and abilities below those of their peers, the strong teaching and effective intervention they receive mean they catch up quickly.

Early years provision

is good

- Leadership of early years is strong. As a result, consistently good teaching is built on high expectations of behaviour and well-established routines. A focus on transition has ensured that there are strong links between early years and Year 1. From their starting points, children's progress is good overall and by the end of the Reception year they are very well prepared to join Key Stage 1.
- Leaders ensure that early years' expertise is shared fully across the team and that the skills of teaching assistants are exploited to the full. Assessments are ongoing and accurate, and involve all the staff in the early years setting, as well as parents and carers. This helps to build a detailed picture of what each child knows, understands and can do. Although children's starting points tend to vary from one year to the next, these meticulous assessments are used to ensure that learning is matched to children's individual interests and needs.
- Pupil premium funding is deployed well to support the learning of disadvantaged children from the moment they enter the early years setting. Assessment information shows that disadvantaged children achieve well.
- The early years curriculum is rich in experience and classrooms are well organised. Children move between the indoor and outdoor learning spaces confidently, and these environments successfully capture

the interest of children and provide opportunities for talk and language development. For example, children regularly walk to the local park and talk about the things they see, hear and find there. They are able to learn and discover through the skilled direction and questioning of staff.

- A culture of safety is embedded and woven through each and every activity planned for children. High expectations, the quality of relationships and the calmness of each learning space contributes to children's sense of well-being and security. All staff calmly and purposefully model and guide children towards an understanding of how to stay safe and grow in independence.
- There are set routines that have been carefully included in the pattern of the day and, through the consistency of repetition by staff, children's behaviour and their attitudes to learning and to others are exemplary. Children's personal, social and emotional development is a strong focus and, as a consequence, children share readily, play happily and are polite and well mannered.

16 to 19 study programmes

requires improvement

- All aspects of the sixth form require improvement. Despite a rise in outcomes for students following vocational courses in 2015, students completing AS and A-level qualifications performed below expectations. The quality of advice and guidance, both into and within the sixth form, is not yet good enough, although leaders have plans in place to address this.
- As in the rest of the secondary phase, there is evidence that leaders are beginning to address these longstanding weaknesses. Alongside this, they are working to ensure that a new collaborative partnership with two other schools to provide sixth-form courses is effective. There is, however, much to be done before sixth-form provision is good. Leaders accept that there has not been enough checking of the quality of teaching and support in previous partnership arrangements. This must improve if sixth-form outcomes are to rise.
- The impact of teaching and assessment also requires improvement. Currently, many students have targets which are too low. This means that the level of challenge provided in some lessons is not high enough to raise standards more quickly. Where students learn well, teachers use accurate assessment information to plan lessons that are closely matched to students' needs and course requirements.
- The support for personal development is also weak. Too many students are not being helped to develop good study habits and the skills they need to learn independently. Leaders have introduced a new enrichment programme, which includes work experience, but it is too soon to see signs of impact.
- The requirements of 16 to 19 study programmes are largely met, although the provision and outcomes for students who need to re-sit GCSE English or mathematics require improvement. Not enough importance is attached to these courses and teachers lack sufficient information about students' prior attainment to plan learning more effectively.
- Leaders in the sixth form are honest and accurate in their evaluation of the sixth-form provision. They are aware of what needs to be done to raise standards and there is evidence that teaching and the use of assessment are beginning to improve. However, it is too soon to see significant impact from many of the changes being introduced.

School details

Unique reference number	135943
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10002422

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

Type of school	All through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,096
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeanette Cook
Chief Executive Principal	Beverley Martin
Telephone number	01454 862626
Website	http://www.trfyia.org.uk/
Email address	office@trfyia.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 December 2013

Information about this school

- The Ridings Federation operates across two schools: Yate International Academy and Winterbourne International Academy. Yate International Academy also includes a primary phase known as the Woodlands Primary and Nursery. Each of these three schools has a separate principal, and the federation as a whole is led by a Chief Executive Principal.
- Since the last inspection, the senior leadership team at Yate International Academy has changed significantly. A new Chief Executive Principal was appointed in the early part of 2015 to work across the federation and to be principal of Yate International Academy. Not long afterwards, the current principals of the primary and secondary phases were appointed as deputy principals for their respective phases. By the end of the summer 2015, the Chief Executive Principal had stepped down as principal of the secondary phase, and the current principals of the primary and secondary phases took up their posts from 1 September 2015. There have also been significant changes to teaching staff during this period, and a new model of governance across the federation is about to be introduced. At the time of this inspection, the Chief Executive Principal was on leave and did not take part in the inspection.
- The academy is similar in size to most secondary schools, although the sixth form is smaller than most. From 1 September 2015, the academy entered into a collaborative arrangement with Brimsham Green and Chipping Sodbury secondary schools to provide sixth-form courses. This collaboration is known as 'Cotswold Edge'.

- Children in early years are taught in a Nursery and a Reception class. The academy also has a hearing-impaired resource base which supports pupils in the primary and secondary phases.
- No pupils attend off-site alternative provision.
- The academy met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a wide range of lessons and other activities at each of the main sites of the academy. They talked to many pupils about their experiences of the academy. In their visits to lessons, inspectors also looked carefully at the quality of students' work and the accuracy of the academy's assessment information. Many lessons were observed jointly with members of the academy's leadership team.
- Discussions took place with the principals of the primary and secondary phases, with other leaders and with various members of staff. The lead inspector met with two trustees (persons responsible for governance at the academy). Inspectors also visited the hearing-impaired unit and talked to staff about its work.
- Inspectors scrutinised records of the academy's self-evaluation, the checks on teaching quality, assessment information and minutes of the meetings of the trustees. Safeguarding documentation and records relating to students' behaviour and attendance were also examined.
- Inspectors looked at the 80 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The views of staff were obtained and 35 responded to a written staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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