

# The Albion Academy

1 London Street, Salford, Lancashire M6 6QT

## Inspection dates

6–7 July 2016

## 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                          | Require improvement  |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is over-generous.
- Pupils do not achieve well enough at GCSE in some subjects. While there are signs of improvement, the pace has been too slow.
- Pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics and science, and especially for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is not as rapid as it needs to be.
- Leaders do not always use information from monitoring activities to address weaknesses in teaching, behaviour or outcomes.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Planning does not always meet the needs of pupils and sometimes lacks sufficient challenge. Teaching assistants are not used effectively to support pupils' progress.
- Pupils do not receive regular homework across subjects to consolidate their learning in school.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement. In some classes there is low-level disruption from a very small group of boys who do not engage positively with their learning. Some teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of behaviour from these boys. As a result, these pupils are less engaged in their learning and make less progress than they should.
- Some pupils are persistently absent, particularly those entitled to free school meals. These pupils do not achieve as well as others.
- The trust and members of the governing body have not challenged the school's senior leaders with sufficient rigour to ensure information about pupils' performance is accurate and pupils' performance improves rapidly enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- The principal is a visionary role model and has high ambitions for all pupils in the school.
- The principal has recently recruited strong middle leaders who are starting to address underperformance and improve outcomes, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress across subjects. Their attainment is in line with the national average.
- Standards have risen in English since the last inspection due to strong leadership and effective teaching.
- Vulnerable pupils are well cared for. Staff go the extra mile to ensure pupils are well supported emotionally and are kept safe from harm.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching so that all pupils make good progress over time by ensuring that:
  - teachers' expectations of all groups of pupils are high enough, so that tasks set are suitably challenging and pupils develop positive attitudes to learning
  - teachers use assessment information more precisely to plug gaps in the knowledge, skills and understanding of individual pupils
  - all teachers provide guidance to pupils as to how they can improve their work in line with the school's marking policy, and check that pupils act on this
  - pupils receive regular homework that consolidates their learning in the school
  - teaching assistants support pupils to make rapid progress within lessons
  - all teachers are responsible for developing pupils' basic literacy skills across subjects and swiftly pick up on mistakes in spelling, grammar and punctuation
  - all teachers secure good behaviour from their pupils so that learning is rarely interrupted by low-level disruption
  - teachers continue to have opportunities to learn from the school's most effective practitioners
  - struggling teachers receive the necessary training, support and resources to equip them with the skills to address negative attitudes to learning, particularly from a small number of boys.
  
- Improve the attendance of pupils who are persistently absent, particularly those entitled to free school meals, and improve their outcomes.
  
- Ensure leaders and managers use the information they gain from monitoring activities effectively so that:
  - weaknesses in teaching are swiftly dealt with
  - supporting action is taken rapidly to plug any gaps in pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics and science, and for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - inconsistencies in the effectiveness of tutor time are addressed.
  
- Ensure that governors develop a better understanding of how well all groups of pupils are progressing across subjects so that they can hold senior leaders to account for underperformance and ensure it is swiftly addressed.

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

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not yet secured consistently good teaching on a day-to-day basis. As a result, GCSE outcomes, although rising now, have been low since the school's opening.
- The principal is ambitious for all pupils in the school and works tirelessly to establish a culture of high expectations of success. The school's motto of 'Stand Together, Achieve Together' captures her drive to improve the life chances of pupils in a caring, collaborative way.
- Since the last inspection, the principal has recruited strong, energetic middle leaders to the school. A clear programme is now in place for holding middle leaders to account for improving the performance of pupils within their areas of responsibility. As a result, teaching is improving, but supportive action to plug gaps at a classroom level is not consistent across all subjects.
- Leaders have not yet secured good behaviour across the school. Sometimes, teachers do not have high enough expectations of how pupils should behave in lessons. Some teachers report that leaders do not equip them with the skills needed to address unacceptable behaviour and negative attitudes to learning.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is over-generous. Improvement plans do not always drill down sharply enough to focus on pupils' progress across subjects and year groups.
- The school's appraisal policy follows statutory guidance. Leaders and teachers receive targets to improve teaching and raise standards, although they do not routinely include the performance of different groups of pupils.
- While leaders have been effective in taking action to improve pupils' attendance, a number of pupils, particularly those entitled to free school meals, do not attend the school regularly and this affects their progress. Leaders have yet to develop a successful strategy to engage with their families to improve attendance.
- The quality of the curriculum is broad and balanced. At the end of Year 9, a small number of pupils can opt to follow a vocational course at one of the local colleges. Leaders ensure pupils are following the appropriate pathways to prepare them well for their next stage in education, employment or training. Next year, the number of pupils opting to take the English Baccalaureate at key stage 4 will double. Leaders are keen that more pupils achieve this standard of education. Enrichment opportunities are provided for pupils at the end of the day but are currently limited to the arts.
- Curriculum planning of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development during tutor time and within individual subjects prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. For example, during tutor time, pupils learn about the Chinese New Year, trooping of the colour, respect and democracy, and stories of British saints, to give them an understanding of fundamental British values.
- The trust has commissioned consultants to monitor different aspects of the school's work. However, there is little evidence of the actions taken by the trust to ensure key areas for improvement are addressed tenaciously to secure the necessary impact on pupils' outcomes. The trust's support does not focus sufficiently on dismantling barriers to raising standards and accelerating the pace of improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors have a good understanding of the contextual challenges facing the school. Meetings take place each half term and records show that governors are involved in the life of the school. The chair of governors meets weekly with the principal to discuss different aspects of the school's work.
  - Governors, while very committed to improving the school, do not place enough emphasis on the key issues contributing to the underperformance of different groups of pupils across subjects and year groups. They do not routinely hold the principal to account for the actions taken to raise standards.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's safeguarding policy is implemented consistently. All staff have undergone training in the 'Prevent' duty. The designated safeguarding lead is experienced and makes effective use of external agencies when the need arises.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Although there are signs of improvement, pupils' progress varies both within subject areas and across them and, as a result, teaching does not ensure that pupils make good progress over time.
- Teachers receive assessment information at regular intervals. However, they do not routinely use this to plan learning that ensures pupils make rapid gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Some teachers do not place enough focus on planning for the needs of individual pupils.
- Teachers' expectations about what lower-ability pupils should be able to learn, and the skills they should develop, are sometimes too low, particularly in Year 7 mathematics. For the most able pupils, particularly in science and mathematics, teachers sometimes plan learning that is based merely on how much pupils would need to know to answer an examination question, without extending their thinking further through probing questioning. Where this happens, pupils do not develop a real interest in or a depth to their knowledge and understanding of the subjects and topics they are studying.
- Where teaching is more effective, particularly in English, history, Spanish and physical education, teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use this effectively to enthuse pupils and develop their curiosity. Teachers identify those pupils who need additional challenge, and those who need more support, and ensure they receive it. Where this works well, teachers give careful consideration to the prior attainment of their pupils. These teachers expect pupils to work hard, to develop their thinking, and to complete their work. They are not satisfied with undemanding responses. In these classes, pupils are fully engaged in learning and make good progress. For example, the teachers' expert knowledge and high expectations enabled more-able Year 10 pupils to make substantial progress in talking and writing about the disadvantages of living in Mexico. They responded well to teaching that took careful account of their knowledge and skills.
- There is now a more robust system for tracking pupils' progress at regular intervals across all year groups and subjects. While subject leaders analyse this information carefully to carry out monitoring activities, it is not always evident that teachers are using it well to accelerate the progress of pupils in their classes, for example in swiftly addressing gaps in learning.
- Most teachers mark pupils' work in accordance with the school's policy. They explain to pupils what they have achieved and what their next steps should be. However, not all pupils follow this guidance to improve their work. Teachers do not regularly pick up on mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar in order to improve pupils' basic literacy skills.
- Teaching assistants are not used well to support the progress of individual pupils or groups of pupils. Pupils do not receive regular homework to ensure they can consolidate their learning beyond what they learn in the school. Leaders do not routinely update homework on the school's website.
- Teaching during tutor time is variable. Not all teachers use the time well to ensure all elements of the personal, social and health education programme are delivered successfully. Where the teaching is stronger, the learning is well structured; pupils are fully engaged working in teams and discussing the topic in a mature way. For example, in Year 9 group, the class was discussing 'Albion Giants' and what this meant to individual pupils. The focus was on raising pupils' aspirations and widening their horizons.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Teachers care for their pupils. They go the extra mile, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils in the school, to ensure they are kept safe.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe, and understand the importance of high-level privacy settings when using social networking sites.
- School staff closely monitor pupils who access any off-site provision. They ensure they attend regularly, are kept safe and make progress.
- Pupils engage in employability, professionalism and enterprise (EPE) lessons. Teachers are working well with pupils to become 'Albion Giants' by raising their aspirations and empowering them to believe that they are part of the future. Pupils receive good information about the different progression routes they can take when they leave the school. Almost all pupils go on to further education.

- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and know what to do if they ever experience unkind behaviour from other pupils. They are confident that any incidents reported will be dealt with swiftly. The school has been active in seeking ways to support pupils who identify themselves as being homosexual or transgender. Consequently, those pupils who spoke to inspectors were very well informed about what constituted homophobic bullying and understood it to be unacceptable.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some pupils are late to lessons and are not prepared to learn. Occasionally, a small group of boys disrupt the learning of others.
- Pupils' work shows that, where teachers have high expectations and plan learning effectively, pupils respond positively, work harder, and achieve more as a result.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning in some subjects. This is particularly the case in the humanities, modern foreign languages and English where teaching is stronger than in other subjects.
- The proportion of pupils who are temporarily excluded from the school because of unacceptable behaviour has been high. This is in part because of the school's 'zero tolerance' of pupils not adhering to 'The Albion Way' that underpins the school's behaviour policy. During the course of the year, the rate of exclusion has dropped, indicating that leaders' approach to behaviour management is starting to be successful. Attendance is improving but some pupils are regularly absent, particularly those entitled to free school meals. While there is some targeted extra support for these pupils which shows signs of success, leaders have yet to engage successfully with some families to improve pupils' attendance.

### Outcomes for pupils

### require improvement

- Pupils do not achieve well enough at GCSE in some subjects. Leaders have not always predicted achievement accurately in the past, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Pupils make better progress in English than in mathematics. However, this year, senior leaders are forecasting that pupils' progress, across a wider range of subjects, will be similar to the national average taking into account pupils' various starting points.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make slower progress than others in the school. The new special educational needs coordinator is working hard to address this by ensuring teachers work more closely with teaching assistants so that these pupils can access their learning. It is too early to assess the impact of this on improved outcomes.
- Pupils, who arrive into Year 7 with standards below national expectations, receive targeted support through a 'foundation group' in English, mathematics and humanities. Progress for these pupils is varied. In English, pupils are catching up quickly because teaching is very strong. The teacher has forged very positive, nurturing relationships with the class. Resources are used well to support their learning and progress. In mathematics, teaching for this group is not as good and, as a result, progress is slower. Pupils report that they do not enjoy these lessons as much as English.
- Numerous pupils, particularly those new to the country, arrive with no assessment information. These pupils make exceptionally good progress and leave the school with standards broadly in line with national averages. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' books supports the school's belief that progress across school is improving, although it remains variable in some subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than previously. Additional funding is used effectively to purchase extra resources, and to provide well-targeted mentoring and support. Hence, the gaps in progress between these pupils and that of others nationally are starting to close. There remains a group of disadvantaged pupils that is affected by poor attendance. These pupils perform less well than others.
- The school works effectively with external agencies to ensure that children who are looked after achieve well and that they are given suitably challenging targets.
- The school has rightly recognised the need to stretch and challenge the most able pupils. Inspectors' scrutiny of these pupils' books during lessons indicates that a greater proportion are making good progress than was previously the case. The school now has a Brilliant Club that meets regularly. This is improving the image of the most able in the school.
- Pupils who follow alternative provision achieve well, and the school receives regular reports on their attendance and progress.

- Pupils are encouraged to read regularly. Training for staff about the reading age requirements for each subject is helping teachers to plan lessons that broaden pupils' range of vocabulary. Numeracy and speaking skills are also targeted through a range of subjects.
- This academic year, leaders have put strategies in place to ensure performance information is more accurate and pupils are better prepared for their examinations. Attendance during examinations this year was significantly higher than previously.
- During the inspection, inspectors jointly examined the teachers' assessments of Year 11 pupils in English, mathematics and science. Inspectors agreed with the school's judgements and acknowledged that teachers are using GCSE examination criteria precisely when assessing pupils' work. Inspectors have confidence in leaders' predictions this year and, as a result, the school should meet the national floor standards.

## School details

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 138418   |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Salford  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 10012209 |

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

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| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Secondary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | School sponsor-led   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11–16  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 760  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Peter Wilson   |
| <b>Principal</b>                           | Jenny Langley  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 0161 359 5100  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.albionacademy.co.uk">www.albionacademy.co.uk</a>           |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | <a href="mailto:albionacademy@salford.gov.uk">albionacademy@salford.gov.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 24–25 June 2014  |

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average secondary school
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils that the school has identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities and the proportion receiving support through an educational, health and plan or statement are above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English. Forty-five pupils take part in off-site alternative learning provided by five local organisations.
- The principal joined the school at its start in September 2012.
- The school is sponsored by the Salford Academy Trust (SAT).
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Although the website meets the government's requirements, it is not always easy to find key information. Leaders do not routinely check if information is up to date. Homework, for example, dates back to April 2016 in some subjects. The examination timetable currently on the site is for the previous academic year.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in nine subjects, some jointly with senior leaders. They examined pupils' exercise books. They observed tutor time and an assembly.
- Inspectors examined the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers. They met with groups of pupils and talked informally with others in lessons and around the school
- Documents were examined including the school's self-evaluation information, improvement plan, safeguarding records, governing body minutes and performance information relating to pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour.
- Meetings were held with the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of Salford Academy Trust and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed five responses to Parent View, which is Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. Questionnaire returns from 47 members of staff and 53 pupils were examined.

## Inspection team

|                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Lisa Crausby, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Elizabeth Haddock            | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Kathleen Harris              | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Anne Senivritane             | Her Majesty's Inspector |



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