

Fulwood Academy

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

Inspection dates

25–26 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
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

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because not enough pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics.
- The gaps in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are not closing rapidly enough, particularly for middle ability disadvantaged pupils.
- Outcomes for students in the sixth form are below average and some do not make the progress they should. Retention rates have been below average.
- Teaching is not yet consistently strong enough across all subjects to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress. Teachers do not always provide the right degree of challenge and this can occasionally lead to pupils losing interest. The school's marking policy is not always followed.
- Teachers across a range of subjects are not effectively supporting the development of pupils' literacy skills.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal, well supported by the senior leadership team, has not shied away from making difficult decisions to bring about improvements. These include closing the sixth form and commissioning an external review of funding to support disadvantaged pupils.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is good. The quality of teaching has improved. Professional development is a strong feature of the school.
- Leaders' work to support the personal development of pupils is effective. Attendance and punctuality have improved.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around the school is mostly calm, orderly and respectful. Most parents, staff and pupils believe that behaviour is improving.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well.
- The school provides good pastoral care for pupils facing challenging circumstances. Leaders ensure that pupils are safe.
- Governors have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of all pupils throughout Years 7 to 11, by:
 - improving the range of teaching strategies used to meet pupils' needs across all ability levels
 - making sure that all teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can do so that more pupils make better than expected progress
 - making sure that teaching is consistently engaging and captures the interest of all pupils
 - improving the consistency of marking so that all staff follow the school's policy
 - using more effective approaches to literacy in lessons to improve pupils' reading, writing and speaking skills.
- Rapidly reduce the gap in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and all pupils nationally by ensuring that:
 - recommendations from the recent external review of pupil premium are embedded into practice
 - the attendance and progress of disadvantaged pupils are checked carefully and swift action is taken where necessary
 - all the school's actions to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils are regularly analysed so that leaders and governors can measure the effectiveness of these actions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal has taken decisive action to tackle the school's remaining weaknesses. He is well supported by the senior leadership team and middle leaders. The decision was made to close the sixth form so that all the best teaching is focused on the main school in the drive to raise standards and improve outcomes for all pupils by the end of Year 11.
- When provisional results were published for the 2016 cohort, it was clear that the gap in the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils compared to all pupils nationally was not closing as rapidly as leaders had hoped. The principal commissioned an in-depth review of how the school uses pupil premium funding and why it is not yet effective in significantly improving outcomes for these pupils. An action plan is now in place as the school is working to implement all the recommendations made in the review.
- Leaders have tackled weaknesses in teaching rigorously. The proportion of weaker teaching has reduced. Most staff take part in regular coaching and there is bespoke support for individual teachers. The impact of teaching is measured through regular visits to lessons, scrutiny of books and systems of assessment. The school is working with the teaching alliance and a partner outstanding school. Teaching is improving but is not yet consistent across and within all departments. For example, the mathematics department now has some very strong teachers and some weaker ones.
- New middle leaders and faculty leaders are making a strong difference to the quality of work in their departments. For example, the new head of mathematics has been proactive in tackling weaknesses, has made teaching a key focus, used his expertise to share good practice and is demonstrating a good capacity to improve outcomes. Impressive leadership is also evident in English, where standards have risen to match the national average, and also in technology and modern foreign languages.
- The pastoral team is effective. Attendance has been a priority and has improved well to be above average. The emphasis is now on ensuring that all pupils are punctual to school and to lessons. The pastoral team provides strong support for vulnerable pupils. The creation of a new base to support pupils' behaviour has been effective in eliminating exclusions this term.
- Leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. The special educational needs coordinator is a real champion of pupils. Tracking the progress of pupils is now a priority and teaching assistants have received additional training to enable them to support pupils effectively.
- The curriculum is broad and flexible with three different pathways available for pupils. Pupils can do a combination of academic and vocational subjects and change pathways if they want to move to more challenging subjects. There is a good increase of pupils eligible for and gaining the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) award. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities including many sports, drama, science, and a new club requested by pupils to enjoy computer activity games.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of British values are fostered through many areas in the curriculum as well as through a specific programme of personal development. These include multi-faith days, the

celebration of Black History Month, support for charities by each house group, pupil elections and a comparison of living in a democracy as opposed to other systems of government. Pupils study the role of political parties, crime and the law, being a global citizen and regional and national identity as part of the programme.

- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used very effectively in the 'springboard' programme aimed at helping lower-attaining Year 7 pupils to quickly gain the necessary skills to take full part in secondary school. A primary specialist works with pupils to increase their reading ages, improve numeracy skills and integrate them into main school classes as rapidly as possible. School data shows very strong progress in reading ages and numeracy for these pupils after only half a term.
- The great majority of parents who responded to the school's internal and Ofsted's external questionnaire, Parent View, expressed confidence in the school's work. The comments of parents who disagreed were discussed with school leaders.
- The pupil premium review identified weaknesses in how the school checks on the success of its strategies to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This is being addressed through a very recent action plan.

Governance of the school

- Governors are working closely with leaders to secure sustained improvements. They are ambitious for the school and have a clear vision of how they want it to improve.
- The new chair of the governing body has increased the number of governors' meetings and created a committee structure so that governors can look closely at different aspects of the school's work and hold the school to account.
- Many members of the governing body are new to the role but have a good range of relevant experience, including in education and finance, to enable them to accurately check the quality of the school's work.
- Governors receive monthly reports on the progress of specific groups of pupils, in particular disadvantaged pupils, the most able and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This ensures that they have a good understanding of whether the school is being effective in prompting the achievement of all pupils equally. A specific governor has been charged with overseeing the school's implementation of the actions recommended in the pupil premium review.
- Leaders report regularly on their areas of responsibility and governors check that they have the right targets to bring about improvements.
- The academy sponsor is closely involved with checking on the quality of the school's work and ensures that finances are managed effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has robust procedures to ensure that it meets all child protection requirements. Staff training is regular and up to date with additional training for staff new to the school. All staff spoken to felt that they were well aware of safeguarding requirements and knew who to talk to if they had any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations are not high enough in some subjects and across some departments. There is not enough good teaching across all subjects to ensure that all groups of pupils make consistently good progress.
- Tasks and activities are not always challenging enough so some pupils are less motivated to learn and this slows their progress and, in the worst examples, leads to low-level disruption.
- Although there is a clear agreed marking policy, the quality of feedback given to pupils is variable. Some feedback is not precise enough to move learning on. Teachers encourage pupils to self-assess their work but do not give them sufficiently precise success criteria so that they can do this effectively.
- Teaching to develop pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum is variable. Some teachers ignore basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Work in pupils' books shows great variation. Some pupils fail to complete work and to respond to teachers' comments while others reflect and improve.
- Teaching has not improved sufficiently to eradicate the differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others.
- The most able pupils make good progress when teachers give them opportunities to discuss their ideas, collaborate, think deeply about information and challenge ideas.
- Overall, teachers' subject knowledge is good and there is some strong and effective teaching in mathematics, English, modern languages and design technology.
- Across the school some strategies are proving to be effective in accelerating learning. For example, the 'do it now' start to lessons ensures that pupils make a prompt start to learning. Many teachers use probing questions to make pupils think deeply.
- Pupils learn well when they follow a sequence of activities which build on prior learning so that they gain confidence and resilience.
- Generally, there are positive relationships between pupils and teachers which enable pupils to express their views readily and discuss their learning.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their individual needs are met and they are well supported in lessons by skilled teaching assistants.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is mostly effective because teachers know students well and provide opportunities for them to develop independent study skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school works hard to promote pupils' personal development through its key values of 'aim high, work hard, be nice and no excuses'. Generally, working relationships between staff and pupils are positive and many pupils appreciate the extra time teachers willingly give to support their progress. The school building is immaculate with no graffiti or disorder. It provides a stimulating and pleasing learning environment.

- Pupils feel safe and say that the school deals well with any incidents of bullying or disruptive behaviour. They are aware that derogatory name-calling is wrong and say that if it occurs, staff deal with it promptly and effectively.
- Pupils feel well informed about issues surrounding drug abuse, knife crime, use of social media and mental health. Learning about e-safety is given a high priority. Pupils value the personal, social and health education programme.
- Pupils have increasing opportunities to develop leadership skills. These include being sports leaders, organising talent shows, becoming digital leaders, house captains and Year 11 prefects. They feel that the house system provides good opportunities for friendly competition.
- Careers advice and guidance are well organised and effective. Pupils experience individual interviews, a world of work week in Year 10 and have access to external impartial advice. There are opportunities to visit universities and colleges as early as Years 7 and 8 through the 'brilliant club'. This is an eight-week course designed to raise aspirations from the beginning of secondary school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils in all years and the great majority of parents and staff believe that behaviour is improving for most pupils. There are instances of unacceptable behaviour but these are reducing rapidly because of effective behaviour management strategies.
- In most lessons, pupils show enthusiasm for learning and engage well with different tasks. In a small minority of lessons behaviour is not impressive. In these lessons, not all pupils receive the challenge they need to maintain their interest and enthusiasm or keep them fully engaged in their work.
- Attendance has improved considerably and is now above the national average. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not as strong. Strategies to improve punctuality are also bringing about improvement.
- Exclusions rose in 2015/16 largely because of a zero tolerance approach to the use of mobile phones in school. So far, in the current year, there have been no exclusions.
- The small number of pupils who learn elsewhere benefit from a broad range of vocational options. Their attendance is high and their progress and welfare is overseen by nominated staff who visit pupils regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes, despite improvements, are not good. Examination results in 2015 showed that overall, pupils' attainment increased on the previous year but progress in mathematics was below average and the gap in the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils compared to all pupils nationally narrowed only slightly.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils making and exceeding expected progress was similar to that of other pupils nationally and the most able disadvantaged pupils did better than others nationally in 2015. However, unvalidated data from 2016 shows that the gap widened again in some areas so the improvement was not sustained. Lower-attaining and most-able disadvantaged pupils are making stronger progress in English and mathematics than those in the middle-ability band.
- Overall in 2015, the proportion of pupils making the expected progress in English

matched the national average but was below the national figure in mathematics.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not achieve well in 2015 but more effective provision and support are now having an impact so that these pupils are currently making better progress.
- Stronger progress is evident in pupils' books since September in all year groups because of improving teaching. The weakest areas remain in mathematics and information technology, but there is an improving picture in both subjects.
- Currently, Year 11 pupils are predicted to achieve better results in 2017 and this is supported by the evidence of work in their books and the school's more rigorous assessment and tracking systems.
- Outcomes for the most able pupils in Year 11 in 2015 improved, with more pupils gaining A* and A grades in a range of subjects. In some subjects, the most able pupils are making good progress because teachers are building their confidence in their own abilities. Pupils are using technical terms correctly and developing their knowledge securely.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as, and frequently better than, their peers in school. This is because the support they receive is well matched to their needs and allows them to play a full part in lessons and the life of the school.
- The progress of the small number of pupils who attend courses elsewhere is checked regularly and shows that they make good progress from their starting points and achieve worthwhile qualifications.
- There is a whole-school focus on improving pupils' enjoyment of reading which is proving effective. Pupils in key stage 3 are encouraged to read for pleasure in the weekly 'drop everything and read' sessions. The library is very well stocked and many pupils spoke about their enjoyment of reading. Teachers are encouraged to focus on improving pupils' literacy when marking work but this is not consistently done across all subjects.
- The quality of careers guidance and the emphasis on pupils' personal development means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education or training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement because in the past, information, advice and guidance have not always ensured that students choose courses that guarantee success. Generally, students enter the sixth form with levels of attainment which are below the national average. The proportion of students in Year 12 who completed their courses in Year 13 was below average.
- In 2015, students' attainment was in line with national figures for academic subjects but below for vocational courses. The strongest progress at A level was made in psychology, English literature, religious studies, photography, French and Spanish.
- The majority of students in Year 13 in 2016 went on to their first choice destination of university, college or apprenticeship.
- Students who continued to study English and mathematics at GCSE level in the sixth form did not improve their grades in 2015 but did much better in 2016.
- Teaching is largely effective. Most groups are very small and students enjoy plenty of

individual support to help them to make progress.

- The school provides a range of enrichment activities designed to increase students' employability skills and provides leadership roles within school and the house system. Many Year 13 students have already completed appropriate work experience and all will do so before they leave next summer.
- Members of the sixth form make a good contribution to the life of the school by mentoring younger pupils and assisting staff in running clubs and extra-curricular activities.
- The closure of the sixth form has been well managed. Once this was announced, students then in Year 12 were able to choose to stay on for a final year or to move to other providers in the area to continue their courses elsewhere. Some went directly into apprenticeship schemes. Leaders ensured a smooth transition for those who chose to go elsewhere.
- The head of sixth form is carefully checking on the progress of the students who remain in Year 13 to make sure that they are on track to achieve their targets to enable them to progress to the colleges and universities of their choice.

School details

Unique reference number	135936
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10025752

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	749
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Raj Kalia
Principal	Stephen Henry
Telephone number	01722 719060
Website	www.fulwoodacademy.co.uk
Email address	s.henry@fulwoodacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- This is a stand-alone academy that is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support from pupil premium funding is high.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The largest groups are from Indian or Pakistani heritage.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A few pupils are educated in alternative provision at Preston College, Preston Vocational Centre, Larches House, 4Techmoto and Myerscough Sports College. Some pupils are attending full-time courses and some are following part-time courses along with other options in school.
- The school is receiving support from an outstanding school, Bishop Rawstorne Church of England Academy.
- In September 2016, the school commissioned an independent review of its use of pupil premium funding.
- The sixth form will close in July 2017 when the students of the current Year 13 complete their courses.
- A new chair of the governing body has been appointed since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a wide range of subjects across all key stages.
- Inspectors looked at a range of work in pupils' books in many subjects across the school, either in lessons or as a separate activity.
- Meetings were held with the principal, other senior leaders, curriculum leaders, other members of staff and groups of pupils in each year group. The lead inspector met governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with the academy sponsor.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation and action plans, the recent review of the use of funding for disadvantaged pupils, information about pupils' attainment and progress, records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, the school's safeguarding and other policies and records on checking on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at the start and end of the school day, at breaks and lunchtimes, visited tutor times and attended one assembly. They talked to many pupils informally at these times and in lessons. Inspectors also considered the 38 responses to the pupil online questionnaire.
- Inspectors gained the views of parents from the 11 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and from a scrutiny of the school's recent parent questionnaire conducted at the end of the last academic year.
- The views of staff were gained from the 38 responses to the online staff questionnaire and from discussions with individual teachers.

Inspection team

Judith Straw, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector
Helen O'Neill	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kath Harris	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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