

The Gainsborough Academy

Sweyn Lane, Off Corringham Road, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 1PB

Inspection dates

6–7 December 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders, including the sponsor, The Lincoln College Academy Trust, have not acted quickly enough to challenge the poor performance of the school. Outcomes for pupils have remained far too low.
- Too many pupils make inadequate progress across a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science. This is because too much of the teaching is mundane and repetitive, failing to enthuse pupils, especially boys, about their learning.
- Governors and leaders do not have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have not been effective at holding leaders to account for low and declining standards.
- Teachers do not always know what pupils can do in lessons and so they do not know whether pupils are finding the work too easy or too hard.
- Teachers' planning is weak and lacks challenge, leading to slow rates of progress for the majority of pupils, but especially the most able.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils does not consistently follow the school's policy to help them to improve their learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is too low and leaders and governors have not made effective use of the additional government funding to raise rates of progress.
- Too many pupils are absent from school. Attendance of disadvantaged pupils is especially low. Leaders have not been successful in putting into place actions to improve this rapidly.
- Leaders and governors are currently looking for another sponsor to support the school because improvements have been too slow to occur. However, this has led to a period of uncertainty in leadership and, consequently, a lack of focus on the urgency of the improvements needed.
- Although pupils and their parents say they feel safe, the school is not taking robust enough action to ensure that those taught away from the school are free from harm. Consequently, safeguarding is inadequate.

The school has the following strengths

- Improvement in pupils' conduct through the 'positive discipline' approach was seen in many lessons. Most students are polite around the school.
- Outcomes in drama, construction and engineering are strong.

Full report

In accordance with sections 44(1) and 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make safeguarding effective by ensuring that there is an appropriate system for monitoring pupils' attendance, which includes rigorous checks on absences, including for those taught at other sites.
- Increase the impact of leadership so that there is rapid improvement in the achievement of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and boys, by:
 - resolving who sponsors the school quickly so that governance can focus on holding leaders to account with more rigour
 - securing effective leadership at all levels, including governance and across the school
 - ensuring the accuracy of pupils' progress information, so that leaders, governors and teachers are better informed about what they need to improve
 - eradicating weak teaching, particularly in English, mathematics and science
 - improving the monitoring of pupils' attendance by including rigorous checks on absence at an earlier stage so that actions can be taken to prevent poor attendance
 - ensuring that leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to improve the attendance, attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils
 - making sure that leaders track closely the work they do to check that all their actions have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes
 - making sure that all members of staff are consistent in their application of school policies, including feedback to pupils.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and reduce the inconsistencies in teaching by:
 - making sure that all teachers use information about pupils' attainment and progress to provide work that is at the right level
 - planning learning activities that enable pupils to become confident learners
 - adapting learning to allow pupils of differing abilities to make good progress
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide them with work that is appropriately challenging
 - providing more bespoke professional development for members of staff, including the sharing of best practice, so that teachers can increase rates of achievement for all pupils across the curriculum, especially for boys, disadvantaged pupils and the

most able.

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 school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and governors have overseen poor outcomes for pupils for too long and they have not demonstrated the capacity to improve them.
- Governance is in a state of flux. Now that the school is the only one in the trust, effectively the trust board has merged with the local governing body at the school to form a new single 'governing body' as from October 2016. Leaders have been investigating finding another trust to sponsor the school, although this is yet to occur. Consequently, there has been inaction on the part of governors in securing urgently needed improvements.
- The trust has not been able to support the school sufficiently to help improve the quality of teaching. It has provided additional leadership support, with an experienced executive headteacher working with senior leaders on a part-time basis, but little else.
- Leaders are not doing enough to tackle poor teaching. Although pupils are underachieving in all the main subjects, progress in science is particularly poor. Leaders are projecting that outcomes will not significantly improve for the next two years for the majority of pupils.
- Leaders and governors have an overgenerous view of the school, which leads to an unrealistic picture of current standards. They revised their judgements about the school during the inspection to being inadequate overall.
- Leaders and governors are not doing enough to stem the decline in the progress of disadvantaged pupils, both historically and currently. Governors commissioned a pupil premium report last year which identified actions they needed to take. They began to act on these recommendations until they realised that all pupils were underachieving. Governors then lost focus on disadvantaged pupils, leading to no improvement in their outcomes.
- In 2016, boys' underachievement was worse than that of girls, although both were very low. Leaders have not yet provided effective strategies to improve this situation.
- Leaders have not done enough to arrest the poor attendance of pupils. Too many are absent from school on a daily basis and over time. The attendance rates of disadvantaged pupils are particularly low.
- The school makes use of alternative providers for a very small minority of pupils. Checks are not yet rigorous enough and sufficiently timely to ensure that these pupils achieve or attend well.
- The school has arranged support from the local teaching school alliance and, more recently, from a grammar school, especially in English. It is too early to see the impact of this on improving the effectiveness of teaching.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced but does not fully prepare pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, for all aspects of life in modern Britain. Although the school has a personal, social, health and education programme, this is insufficiently planned to allow pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of British values in a systematic way.

- The school uses displays around the school and events to raise the awareness of pupils of anti-bullying and careers. However, these approaches are insufficiently embedded in the curriculum to make a consistent, positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders and governors have introduced a 'positive discipline' approach to improve pupil behaviour during the past year. This has been successful in ensuring that most lessons are able to progress without low-level disruption. Most pupils now behave well around the school.
- It is recommended that newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Governance of the school

- Governance is inadequate because governors have not done enough to prevent the decline in the school's performance. Although there is some evidence of challenge in the minutes of the governing body and trustee meetings, they have too readily accepted inaccurate and unsupported information from school leaders about pupils' performance. They have therefore failed to hold leaders to account for pupils' underachievement.
- Governors have not ensured that the additional pupil premium funding provided for disadvantaged pupils has been spent effectively to help these pupils make progress in line with non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. They have not reviewed the impact of the effectiveness of the funding for the last year and, consequently, have not published it.
- Governors are ineffective in holding leaders to account for the extra funding received to help Year 7 pupils catch up in English and mathematics. They are yet to review the impact of actions taken last year.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The current arrangements to monitor pupils' attendance are not adequate. Leaders do not follow up absences with sufficient rigour, including for those pupils receiving education off-site. Leaders do not make the connections between pupils' attendance and potential safeguarding issues. Appropriate support is therefore not provided for pupils. This places pupils at unnecessary risk.
- The safeguarding policy is not up to date and does not take into account the latest statutory guidance as from September 2016. Not all the statutory checks for key leaders had been completed at the time of the inspection.
- Pupils are taught how to keep safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism through the school's personal, social, health and education programme and assemblies. Leaders have a good understanding of what the risks are in the local community and all staff have undergone 'Prevent' training. Pupils who spoke with inspectors knew what the systems were for ensuring their safe use of the internet in school. Staff are alert to the possible signs that pupils may be at risk.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Too much teaching is mundane, poorly planned and inappropriate for pupils' abilities. There is not enough good teaching to accelerate pupils' achievement.
- Teachers and pupils do not understand assessment information or where pupils are in their learning well enough. Teachers do not regularly check on pupils' understanding in lessons or plan learning that is appropriate to pupils' needs. Consequently, learning is either too easy or too difficult and does not take into account pupils' starting points.
- The teaching of English, mathematics and science is not good enough. In too many of these lessons, work is repetitive and at too low a level to accelerate learning so that pupils can catch up with others nationally.
- There is a lack of challenging work to help the most able pupils develop at a fast enough rate. Consequently, these pupils do not make the progress they are capable of achieving. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics lesson, pupils were asked to convert percentages to decimals and this was inappropriately basic and repetitive work for all, particularly for those pupils who had already mastered the task.
- Teaching in science is particularly poor overall. In too many lessons, pupils are not given sufficient information by the teacher to be able to help them progress in their learning. Teachers often hurry through explanations without enough details or examples. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, pupils were not able to understand what was happening in an experiment because they had not been given enough information by the teacher. In another lesson, Year 10 pupils struggled to keep up with the plants and animals revision topic because the teacher had not prepared them well enough before they attempted to answer the questions.
- Scrutiny of books shows that there are wide variations in the quality of assessment. Some books are accurately assessed, while in others, feedback did not match the school's policy, even within the same department.
- Too many pupils, boys and disadvantaged pupils in particular, do not take pride in the presentation of their books. There are many examples of graffiti in and pages falling out of pupils' books. This is representative of the low expectations to which pupils and teachers have resigned themselves.
- When the teaching is better, pupils are more motivated and keen to work hard. However, although in many lessons pupils just sit quietly when teaching is less effective, inspectors did see examples of some very poor behaviour from a small minority of pupils.
- The introduction of a commercial reading programme is beginning to raise standards of literacy across the school. Inspectors heard pupils read, which the least and the most able were able to do with some fluency, demonstrating the early success of the approach. All pupils are expected to read at least once a week in a tutor session, although not all pupils take advantage of this, as inspectors learned from interviews with pupils and from observations.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and a majority of their parents agree with this. However, inspectors were concerned whether the school knows enough about the whereabouts of their pupils who are educated at other sites. Insufficiently rigorous procedures are in place for leaders and governors to be reassured about the safety of these pupils.
- In some lessons, there is evidence of pupils not taking pride in their work. Much of this is incomplete and tatty, particularly from boys. Teachers were observed giving pupils paper ripped from a book to write on and, although they tried hard and wrote thoughtfully, they said that they would probably lose it.
- Older pupils say that they are clear about their next steps in education at the end of Year 11. Careers advice is taking place but many pupils are not aware of the help they can get. It is difficult to see how the careers curriculum ensures appropriate coverage and progression. For example, 'planning for the future' is a module of this but it is not clear when this takes place and how it is developed for older pupils. There is a lack of information about the post-16 bursary scheme available to pupils. All pupils, however, progressed into learning of some kind from Year 11 in 2016.
- Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare and, when they do occur, the school deals with these effectively.
- When child protection issues do arise, they are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Attendance has continued to be too low for all pupils and it is particularly low for disadvantaged pupils. No improvement has been seen this year and attendance has remained at a stubbornly low level.
- The attendance of girls is lower than for boys. Rates of persistent absence are very high for all pupils and for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Procedures for monitoring attendance are not rigorous enough. Pupils say that they do not get a phone call from the school until the third day of their absence. The school accepts that systems and approaches need to be tighter, not least given the potential safeguarding concerns that arise from so much absence.
- Leaders and governors introduced a 'positive discipline' approach to managing behaviour during the last year. This has been successful in ensuring that more pupils show good conduct in lessons and around the school. However, this is yet to result in positive attitudes to learning and a small minority of pupils are still disruptive in some lessons.
- Fixed-term exclusions are high. They peaked with the introduction of 'positive

discipline' but have remained high since then.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes have been very low for all pupils since the previous inspection. Despite predictions to the contrary, progress information in 2016 showed no improvement overall from the previous year and pupils underachieved in all the major subject areas.
- From their starting points, pupils' progress was very low in English, mathematics, science, humanities and modern foreign languages in 2016. It showed no improvement from the time of the previous inspection. This pattern is replicated for the most able, for boys and for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have been very low for the past two years, with progress from their starting points in the lowest 10% nationally in 2016. Progress was particularly low in English, mathematics, science, humanities and modern foreign languages for these pupils.
- The school's tracking system is showing that outcomes should improve for the current Year 11 pupils in English and mathematics but these are still predicted to be well below national averages. In science, the predicted outcome is very poor, with progress expected to be lower than in 2016 for the majority of pupils. This is also true for current Year 10 pupils because the teaching is not good enough. Leaders agree that this is not acceptable but seem unable to do much to rectify the situation.
- Current assessment information from the school shows that boys are still making less progress than girls in English, mathematics and science. Progress for disadvantaged pupils is still well below that of pupils nationally and these differences are still evident across the curriculum.
- Inspectors did not generally see rapid progress in pupils' books. In a sample of books provided by the school, both current and predicted grades are lower than necessary for pupils to make appropriate progress towards their frequently challenging targets.
- There is some evidence to suggest that those pupils in Years 7 and 8 with low starting points are making better progress in English and mathematics than their peers.
- Although outcomes were low for the pupils who left Year 11 in 2016, they all progressed into education or employment with some formal learning, including some on apprenticeship schemes. The school recognises that there is still more to do to raise aspirations for some pupils regarding their next steps and wants more pupils to move into sixth-form provision, for example.
- In 2016, the school did not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupil progress.

School details

Unique reference number	135666
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10019563

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 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	725
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Batty
Headteacher	David Miller
Telephone number	01427 612 411
Website	www.thegainsboroughacademy.org.uk/
Email address	david.miller@thegainsboroughacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about: exam and assessment results at key stage 4; details on courses for all year groups; how parents or members of the public can find out more about the school's curriculum; the accessibility plan for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; equalities objectives; pupil premium funding; Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium funding and the charging and remission policy.
- This is a below-average-sized secondary school.
- The organisation sponsoring the school has, since June 2014, been The Lincoln College Academy Trust.
- The school currently uses two alternative providers, 'Good Apple' and 'The Pilgrim

School'.

- The school operates in an area where some students attend grammar schools.
- The vast majority of students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receiving support through statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans is well above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 34 lessons, eight of which were seen jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors made short visits to tutor time.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at break, lunchtime and as pupils moved around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised, in detail, a range of pupils' books in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the chair of the governing body, who is also the chair of the trust, and other governors and trustees of The Lincoln College Academy Trust, the current school sponsor.
- Inspectors spoke with a wide range of pupils from all year groups in meetings, in lessons and around the school at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of the school's documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school action plan, information on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding procedures, evaluations of the quality of teaching and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 48 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire, 64 responses to the online staff questionnaires and 65 responses to the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jamie Clarke, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Ward	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Hunt	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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