

Gloucester Academy

Painswick Road, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL4 6RN

Inspection dates

17–18 April 2018

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
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have failed to improve the standard of education since the previous inspection.
- The support offered by the multi-academy trust has failed to make an impact until recent months.
- Too often teaching is weak and poorly matched to the needs of pupils. Leaders, including middle leaders, are not effectively holding teachers to account for weak outcomes.
- Teachers' expectations are too low. As a result, pupils are making poor progress, especially at key stage 4.
- Leaders' plans to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities have had little impact.
- Pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills are weak in English and mathematics and across the wider curriculum.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not stretched and challenged in their work and are making the least progress of all groups in the school.
- Attendance of pupils is too low, especially of the most vulnerable pupils.
- Safeguarding is not effective. Leaders have failed to follow the correct procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils on a regular basis.
- Too few sixth-form students are provided with work experience opportunities.
- Too many pupils display persistent poor behaviour. This disrupts learning for other pupils.
- Leaders have not promoted pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Too many pupils are not aware of fundamental British values. As a result, pupils are not prepared well for life in modern Britain.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils learn well in humanities and are making better progress than in other subjects.
- Support from trust leaders has been more effective in recent months.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) 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?

- Leaders and managers drive rapid improvements in the standard of education in the school by ensuring that:
 - they quicken the pace of change
 - the impact of their plans, policies and practice is monitored effectively to ensure that outcomes for pupils improve
 - expectations are raised, so that pupils' progress is at least in line with national expectations
 - middle leaders have the skills to monitor the work of teachers so that teaching improves consistently
 - pupils develop a good understanding of British values and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum so that they are prepared well for life in modern Britain
 - pupils' attitudes to learning improve and episodes of misconduct are swiftly reduced.
 - attendance overall, and particularly of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, improves so that it is at least in line with the national average.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - teachers provide effective opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy within English and mathematics and across the wider curriculum
 - the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are provided with learning that is sufficiently challenging and deepens their thinking
 - pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils are provided with support that stretches their learning further so that they make good progress from their starting points.

An external review of the impact 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

Inadequate

- Since September 2015, throughout the principal's time at the school, the multi-academy trust and the regional schools' commissioner have provided support to try to achieve rapid improvement. Despite this input, pupils' progress has remained in the lowest 20% nationally in each of the last three years.
- School leaders do not have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a result, leaders have not understood the need for rapid change.
- Improvement planning is weak, because leaders' self-evaluation is inaccurate and their expectations set too low. Actions are undertaken without enough consideration of their purpose. Similarly, leaders do not consider the impact of their actions. Consequently, funding is wasted and pupils' progress remains weak. For example, teachers receive weekly training but this has failed to improve standards.
- Middle leaders do not have the leadership skills to hold teachers to account for weak performance. As a result, teaching is variable. New initiatives, such as the marking and feedback policy, are not applied consistently across the school, so too few pupils improve their work. Where there is good leadership, as in humanities, best practice is not shared in a systematic way.
- Leaders have not promoted pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Until the past academic year, not all year groups were receiving religious education lessons. Pupils are not aware of British values and their importance in creating a democratic society. Equally, pupils are not provided with advice and guidance about future careers and qualifications from an early age. As a result, pupils are ill-prepared for education and employment post-16 and to make an active contribution to wider society.
- Leaders have not monitored the spending of funds for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities well. Pupils who have education, health and care plans have better support to develop their personal and social skills but not enough attention is paid to their academic success.
- Leaders spend too much of the funding for disadvantaged pupils on whole school initiatives. The particular needs of these pupils are not understood and, consequently, their progress remains very poor.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding has been spent on improving reading, with some limited success. The support for mathematics and other aspects of literacy has had weaker impact.
- Systems for ensuring that pupils attend regularly are not effective. There have been some changes in the past few weeks, initiated by trust leaders, but these actions have not yet improved rates of attendance. School leaders have failed to ensure the safety of those pupils, often the most vulnerable, who are frequently absent.
- The headteacher has implemented behaviour systems which have improved attitudes within lessons. More pupils are compliant and prepared for their learning than previously. Staff and pupils comment on the positive impact this has on the day-to-day

operations. However, not enough has been done to manage the misbehaviour of those who are persistently disruptive, particularly at lunch and breaktimes.

- The headteacher has engaged with the local community effectively. As a result, there are more parents and carers attending reviews about their children's progress and more pupils attending the sixth form.
- It is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governors are aware of the weaknesses and express their frustration at the rate of improvement. Governors have found school leaders slow to respond to their expectations. For instance, they asked for attendance data to be provided in a meaningful way so that they can monitor it accurately, but this has not happened.
- Governors are keen and capable of challenging leaders. The necessary high level of involvement by the trust in the day-to-day management of the school has blurred the lines of strategic leadership for governance. In managing the operational aspects of the school, the trust has had less time to plan ahead and drive improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- There are several pupils on part-time timetables for a range of reasons. The local authority is aware of these pupils. However, re-integration plans are not effective as pupils are not returning to school swiftly.
- Fire evacuations have been too slow and practices are not done routinely.
- Attendance is significantly below the national average. The majority of pupils who are missing from education are vulnerable, including those identified with an increased risk of harm.
- Checks on staff recruitment are effective and comply with expectations.
- Staff are trained to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation and the influence of radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching is weak and results in underachievement. At times, pupils' misconceptions are not picked up, particularly in mathematics and science. Some teachers have weaknesses in their subject knowledge and are compounding pupils' misconceptions. In English, pupils are not helped to overcome weaknesses in technical accuracy.
- Teachers' weak assessment leads to poor and ineffective planning. Teachers do not make effective use of assessment to challenge the most able or to provide activities closely matched to the needs of those pupils with low ability. As a result, outcomes for pupils are poor, so they are ill-prepared for the next steps in their education.
- A new feedback and marking policy was introduced recently. However, too many teachers are not applying it consistently so outcomes for pupils have not improved. In

line with the revised code of practice, the SEN coordinator has provided staff with detailed profiles of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, too often teachers are failing to adapt learning sufficiently to support their needs. As a result, academic progress for many of these pupils is poor.

- Similarly, teachers are not providing enough support for the needs of disadvantaged pupils, so they are trailing behind their peers in their learning.
- Many pupils start school with low reading skills. In the past year, teachers have done more to improve pupils' reading on arrival. Although a few pupils now make better progress, there are still too many who are not at their chronological reading age. As weakness in literacy skills continue, pupils make very poor progress in both reading and writing.
- Leaders have introduced a new online homework system. However, teachers checking and evaluation of homework is inconsistent, so few pupils are gaining from their home learning.
- Pupils who have English as an additional language are supported well by higher-level teaching assistants. Currently, the main focus is with Year 11 pupils and preparation for examinations.
- Pupils are challenged very well in humanities, as planning is secure and matches pupils' needs. As yet, the good practice in this department has not been shared effectively across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are not taught well about spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of life in the 21st century. Pupils are not helped to develop an understanding of British values and are underprepared for life in modern Britain.
- There are few opportunities for pupils to take on positions of responsibility. This minimises their ability to gain confidence in meaningful ways that would help them in future careers.
- Pupils and staff spoke of their concerns about the ease of access on to the site. However, leaders were able to show that there are regular checks in place and appropriate risk assessments to manage pupils' safety on the premises.
- Pupils are aware of the dangers of the internet. They understand about taking care to ensure that online relationships are appropriate.
- Pupils say there is little bullying and that leaders deal with it well when it occurs. Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying, but are less sure of the ways to resolve it.
- The alternative day unit provides a sanctuary for pupils who are struggling with mental health issues. Pupils benefit from the support provided and spoke of their appreciation of the work done.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- There are still too many pupils who are boisterous and disrespectful and too often disrupt learning for other pupils.
- Although there are systems to deter pupils from arriving late, staff do not apply them consistently. Consequently, too many pupils arrive late to school and are not challenged.
- Attendance is below national averages and persistent absence is above. Leaders' targets are set too low. For example, there is a particular spike in non-attendance on Fridays that current leaders have been slow to address. Trust leaders have appointed new staff and introduced stricter practices but this is very recent and has yet to have an impact.
- Permanent exclusions are above national average and have been for the past three years. There is a reduction in fixed-term exclusions, but the number of pupils excluded is still high and triple the national average. The root causes of misbehaviour are not analysed effectively and so repeat offences persist.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- The outcomes at key stage 4 have been below the government's minimum expectations for several years.
- Too many pupils are underachieving. Although pupils in some year groups joined the school with low attainment, that was not the case for the Year 11 cohort in 2017. These pupils entered school with attainment in line with the national average and left with examination results that were significantly below. There were several pupils who joined the school as mid-year transfers. Even allowing for this, pupils' outcomes were below the minimum expectations.
- Progress from pupils' starting points is inadequate. The progress of pupils in English and mathematics in different year groups remains low. Teaching of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is weak and fails to improve pupils' basic skills and understanding.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils from their different starting points in English, mathematics and the majority of English baccalaureate subjects is consistently well below other pupils nationally. In addition, leaders do not evaluate the impact of funding on pupil progress, so actions are not streamlined for maximum effect.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making less progress than their peers. Learning activities are not matched to their needs, and as a result they are not challenged sufficiently.
- Pupils' proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics is not sufficiently strong for them to succeed in their next stage of education, training or employment. Students in the sixth form commented on the lack of preparation they experienced when starting A levels.

- The vice-principal has introduced new systems that focus more carefully on the progress of individual pupils. However, there is a variance in the effectiveness shown by subject leaders to intervene when pupils fall behind. As a result, improvement in pupils' progress is still poor.
- The results in humanities are better than other subjects because leadership is stronger.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Expectations are too low in some subjects. Students' success in some subjects is dependent on their own motivation and ability, and is not as a result of the quality of teaching.
- The personal development and welfare of students are not consistent. Teachers vary in the delivery of information that students need.
- The capacity of the leader of the sixth form to drive improvements has reduced because of conflicting demands on his time. For example, leaders have not secured high-quality work experience placements to help students develop clear and realistic plans for their future training and employment. Too few students are experiencing off-site work opportunities.
- Attendance is too low overall in the sixth form. Often, there are a third or a half of students missing from their studies on a daily basis.
- The leader of the sixth form has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the sixth form. Staff are held to account and, consequently, teaching has improved in many subjects.
- There was a positive shift in students' progress in 2017 and results at A level were significantly above the national average. Disadvantaged pupils achieve well.
- Students' attitudes are good. Those in school are keen to do well and engage in their learning. Teachers' questioning is skilful and students respond well and deepen their understanding as a result.
- Programmes of study are bespoke to individual students and support their needs well.
- Most students who need to retake level 2 qualifications in English and mathematics are successful.
- Careers advice and guidance is better in the sixth form than it is in the main school. The advice given is delivered impartially by external organisations.

School details

Unique reference number	136199
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10048264

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

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	808
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	85
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Geraldine Beatty
Principal	Ian Frost
Telephone number	01452428800
Website	http://www.gloucesteracademy.com/
Email address	info@gloucesteracademy.com
Date of previous inspection	16–17 March 2016

Information about this school

- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on Key Stage 4 academic performance results in 2015, 2016 and 2017.
- Gloucester Academy is part of the White Horse Federation multi-academy trust.
- The school became an academy in September 2010 and moved to its new buildings in September 2013.
- Gloucester Academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the proportion who have an education, health and care plan, are both above the national average.
- The school does not meet the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at key stage 4.
- The outcomes in the sixth form are above the national threshold.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons, many jointly with senior leaders.
- A wide sample of pupils' work, from all year groups and a range of subjects, was scrutinised.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5, as well as with pupils informally across the site.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and directors for the trust.
- Documentary and other types of information were evaluated, including evidence relating to safeguarding, assessment, school evaluation and external reviews.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to, and 17 comments in, the online Parent View survey, the parental survey undertaken by the school, the 36 responses to the pupil survey and the 37 responses to the staff online survey.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Judith Mee	Ofsted Inspector
David New	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Henshaw	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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