

Inspection of Fulwood Academy

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

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 February, and 6 and 7 July 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Fulwood Academy. They value the support that they get from staff. The pupils with whom inspectors spoke were unanimous in the view that staff care about their well-being. Staff do not tolerate any form of unkind behaviour. Incidents of bullying are rare. When bullying does occur, pupils are confident that staff will deal with it quickly and effectively.

Pupils' behaviour has improved. This is because most teachers have increasingly high expectations of pupils' behaviour. That said, occasional low-level disruption spoils the learning of some pupils. Pupils appreciate how visible and how approachable teachers are during social times. Pupils feel safe at school. They socialise well with their peers.

Most pupils are polite and friendly. They are enthusiastic about the vast array of opportunities available to them through the personal development curriculum. For example, pupils said that they learn how to respect others' cultures and beliefs.

Pupils said that their teachers want them to achieve well. Most pupils concentrate on their learning. However, pupils do not benefit from a curriculum that is delivered consistently well. Some teachers do not ensure that pupils remember new learning as well as they should. Although there are recent signs of improvement, pupils have underachieved for many years by the time they leave key stage 4.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have taken appropriate action to increase the breadth and ambition of the curriculum for all pupils. Across key stage 3, pupils study a broad range of subjects in line with the national curriculum. More pupils at key stage 4 are choosing subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate. This is because leaders and teachers are raising their expectations of what pupils can and should achieve.

Leaders have ensured that the content of subject curriculums is increasingly demanding. Subject leaders have received appropriate training to enable them to plan their subject curriculums effectively. Subject leaders and teachers know what they want pupils to learn and the order in which they want pupils to learn it. As a result, pupils across the school, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are making better progress through the curriculum than in the past. Added to this, leaders' strategies to support pupils who are behind with their reading are beginning to take effect.

However, although ambitiously planned, the curriculum is not delivered effectively across all subjects. This is because some subject leaders do not check that teachers are delivering the planned curriculum as leaders intend. In some subjects, teachers do not present subject matter in a way that helps pupils to know more and remember more. Additionally, some teachers do not use effective strategies to check

that pupils remember the knowledge that they must learn. This means that pupils' learning, although improving, is uneven across the curriculum.

The leadership of SEND is improving. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides all staff with the information that they need to make curriculum adaptations for pupils with SEND. However, some teachers do not use this information successfully. Therefore, pupils with SEND are making better progress in some subjects than others.

Most pupils regulate their own behaviour. Social spaces are generally calm. Many pupils said that they can learn in their classrooms. That said, some pupils feel that there is inconsistency in the way that staff challenge occasional inappropriate behaviour. This leads to disruption to learning in some lessons.

While leaders have implemented many strategies to improve attendance, some pupils who are disadvantaged and those with SEND do not attend as regularly as they should. This is affecting how well they progress through the curriculum, because they miss elements of their learning.

The personal development curriculum is raising pupils' aspirations. For example, pupils said that their teachers help them to make links between the subjects that they are studying and possible future careers. Most pupils in Year 11 are no longer attending school. However, a group of pupils from Year 11 are currently completing work experience at school. This is to help them to prepare for the next stage of education, employment and training.

Trustees' commitment to supporting leaders is palpable. Parents and carers appreciate leaders' efforts to improve the culture of the school, including the quality of education. Most staff feel that leaders take their workload and well-being into account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff are well trained in the procedures for keeping pupils safe. Staff know pupils and their families well. They know how to spot the signs that a pupil is at risk. Leaders and staff make timely referrals to external agencies when necessary. This ensures that pupils and families get the help that they need.

Pupils learn how to stay safe online and in the community through the personal development curriculum. For example, they have recently been learning about self-image. Pupils know that if they have concerns, any member of staff will be willing and able to support them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' vision for the quality of education is not realised across all subject areas. This is because some subject leaders do not routinely check that teachers deliver the curriculum in a way that helps pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders are equipped to develop teachers' practice and subject pedagogical knowledge, so that teachers are better able to deliver the curriculum effectively.
- Some teachers do not know how much of the curriculum content that pupils remember. This is because some teachers do not routinely use assessment strategies to check whether pupils know more and remember more across a sequence of lessons. As a result, some pupils have missing knowledge. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used effectively across all subjects to help pupils to learn and embed important knowledge.
- Teachers' support for pupils with SEND is variable. This is because some teachers do not know how to use the information provided by the SENCo to make curriculum adaptations for pupils with SEND. Consequently, in some subjects, pupils with SEND underachieve. Leaders should ensure that all staff are trained to enable them to make successful curriculum adaptations for pupils with SEND.
- Currently, not all staff enforce leaders' expectations of how well pupils must behave. This means that, occasionally, relationships between staff and pupils are not as positive as they could be and there is occasional disruption to learning in lessons. Leaders should ensure that all staff are proactive in managing behaviour in the classroom.
- The attendance rates of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND is below that of their peers in school. This prevents these pupils from progressing through the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders should build on the strategies that they have put in place to improve the attendance of all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	135936
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10184638
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	707
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joan Dean
Principal	David Lancaster
Website	www.fulwoodacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 and 11 February 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new principal has been appointed.
- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils at Preston Vocational Centre, Larches High School, Creativity Works Preston and Hawthorn Education.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the principal, the senior leadership team, middle leaders and a range of teaching and support staff. An inspector spoke with three trustees, including the chair of trustees, and two parent governors.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history and art and design. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited some lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils and teachers.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from Year 7 to Year 10. Inspectors also observed breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding procedures and the checks made on staff. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding in school. An inspector also checked the arrangements for pupils attending alternative provision.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, the school development plans, self-evaluation documents, curriculum plans and behaviour and attendance records.
- At the time of this inspection, Year 11 pupils were no longer attending school. A small number of Year 11 pupils were completing work experience on the school site.
- Inspectors considered the 56 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff. Inspectors also checked the views of the 158 parents in their responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. This included the 155 comments received via the free-text facility.

Inspection team

Rachel Goodwin, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Bather	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Veitch	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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