

William Hulme's Grammar School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135296
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	343193
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Angela Headon HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	870
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Marsden
Principal	Mr Peter Mulholland
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Academy address	Spring Bridge Road Manchester Lancashire M16 8PR
Telephone number	0161 2262054
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 33 lessons, and held meetings with staff, pupils and the chair of governors. They observed the academy's work, and looked at the 96 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, together with the 184 completed by pupils and the 69 completed by staff. Inspectors also reviewed a range of documents including the academy's analysis of pupils' academic progress and attainment, safeguarding information, improvement plans, records of classroom observations and the academy's self-evaluation document.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- progress in lessons; how well teaching is informed by assessment information and targets, activities are matched to pupils' different learning needs and to what extent pupils are involved in their own learning
- the impact of care, guidance and support on improving outcomes for specific groups of pupils, including those with learning needs, language development needs and vulnerable pupils
- the attainment, learning and progress of pupils, particularly in the sixth form, in Key Stage 3, and in weaker performing subjects
- the quality of leadership, particularly middle leaders, and the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures on ensuring equality of opportunity for pupils.

Information about the school

William Hulme's Grammar School is an all-through city academy which opened in September 2007. The predecessor school was independent and the academy is sponsored by United Learning Trust (ULT). The academy's specialisms are modern foreign languages and science.

The academy is smaller than average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The number of pupils from minority ethnic communities is higher than average, with a total of 25 languages spoken. Mobility levels are high. The principal and the head of the junior school started at the academy in September 2008. Almost all staff transferred from the predecessor school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

William Hulme's Grammar School is a good and improving academy with a strong inclusive ethos. It is a welcoming place where all pupils are valued as individuals and achieve well, both academically and personally. Pupils are proud to attend the academy, which enjoys the support of a very large majority of parents and carers.

The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils of all ages are benefiting from the academy's continuing emphasis on improving the quality of classroom practice. Positive relationships between staff and pupils contribute substantially to success in lessons, with good learning and progress evident in all year groups. The academy is aware, however, that assessment information is not always used effectively in all lessons to inform pupils how to improve further and reach their targets.

Although, presently, access to the outdoor provision is limited, children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and continue to make good progress throughout the primary phase to Year 6. Attainment at Key Stage 2, as indicated in national test results, is significantly above average. At Key Stage 4, pupils continue to make very effective progress and attainment in key performance measures in Year 11 remains high. However, the academy fully recognises the need to strengthen performance in a number of subjects both at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form to secure the best possible outcomes for all learners and to ensure consistently high attainment across the academy.

Provision for care, guidance and support is good and pupils feel safe in the academy. Groups of pupils, such as those with additional learning or language development needs, make good progress in line with their peers. Academy leaders have worked swiftly since the start of the academic year to strengthen further the quality of personalised support and also to introduce a new curriculum structure to cater for the full range of individual needs. The academy's strong emphasis on enrichment and extra-curricular activities, the impact of the modern foreign language and science specialisms and the range of local, national and international links are all used well and successfully to promote pupils' academic success and further improve their personal outcomes.

The principal effectively demonstrates outstanding leadership, with a clear vision and determination to improve the academy further. He works collaboratively with senior leaders, governors and a supportive workforce who are all equally ambitious for the future of the academy. Together, they have a very accurate picture of current performance and a sound understanding of what needs to be done to keep up the momentum of change across a number of areas while maintaining academic success. Currently, not all subject leaders play a full part in reviewing pupils' progress and

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outcomes. However, robust monitoring by senior leaders, together with measurable improvements in all areas highlighted from the previous monitoring inspection in 2008 reflects the academy's good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that assessment information is used more precisely in lessons so that pupils are clear about what level they are working at and what they need to do to improve further.
- Use the best practice within the academy to develop further the work of middle leaders and increase their impact on pupils' performance.
- Improve the overall effectiveness of the sixth form by:
 - eliminating the variability in subject performance
 - strengthening further the quality of provision and leadership.
- Ensure that the planned improvements to the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage are implemented as quickly as possible.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In the majority of lessons observed by inspectors, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, made good progress and enjoyed their learning. This was particularly the case in those lessons where assessment information was used well. In these lessons, activities were well matched to pupils' ability levels and, through skilful targeted questioning and discussion, pupils had opportunities to explain their thinking and they understood what they needed to do to improve further.

Recent examination results reflect this current picture. Attainment overall is significantly above average and the academy has continued successfully to increase the number of pupils who achieve expected levels at the end of Year 6. Although provisional GCSE examination results indicate a marginal decline in the proportion of pupils attaining five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, standards for Year 11 pupils remain high. The academy is well aware that performance in a small number of subjects requires further improvement and has already taken action to address this variability.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is good and this is evident in all they do and in the way they behave with each other and adults alike. Through faith assemblies and the house system pupils understand and respect each others differences, demonstrate very good social skills and are confident and keen to do well. Their views, whether elicited individually or through the school council, are listened to. As a result, pupils show initiative and willingly accept responsibility, contributing well to both academy life and the wider community. Examples include pupil mentoring, work with charitable organisations, 'teaching a friend a language' (TAFAL) and involvement in a range of community projects.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and are continuing to develop a range of skills and approaches to further enhance the quality of lessons. Information and communication technology, particularly interactive whiteboards, is used effectively to motivate, enthuse and challenge pupils across the age range.

In outstanding lessons, teachers use pupils' prior attainment well to ensure the level of challenge is appropriate for all pupils in the class and progress towards learning objectives is carefully monitored,. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these lessons and make quick gains in their learning. Although the academy tracks pupils' performance, in some lessons this information is not always used to plan activities which allow pupils to make at least good progress. Equally, although many pupils are aware of their targets, they are less sure about the levels they are working at or how to reach the next level or grade.

The recently remodelled curriculum, carefully developed to meet pupils' changing needs, is richly enhanced by an extensive range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities in arts, science and sport. Complementary experiences in the Combined Cadet Force and

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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during residential visits, which further promote pupils' personal and academic development, are fully appreciated by pupils.

The academy provides a caring and supportive environment for all pupils. Pastoral leaders work productively with academy staff and external partners to ensure pupils are able to make the most of all the academy provides. Vulnerable pupils, those at risk of disaffection or those who have additional learning or language development needs, benefit from well-considered targeted provision. There are good arrangements in place to ease the transition from one phase of education to the next, which parents overwhelmingly recognise.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The principal's excellent leadership, promoting an ethos of inclusion and achievement, has been a force in ensuring the academy continues to drive forward, at pace, an agenda to secure further improvements in academic standards. In this, he is well supported by the head of the junior school and the senior leadership team.

There is a strong commitment to continually develop the quality of teaching and improve pupils' academic progress in all subject areas. Equality of opportunity is actively promoted across the academy, with no significant difference in attainment evident between any groups of pupils. Monitoring procedures and performance management arrangements are sharply focused on pupils' outcomes and senior leaders have a secure view of the quality of lessons.

Self-evaluation is very accurate and the academy is fully aware of its strengths and areas where improvement is needed. As a result, the academy has clear strategies in place to tackle the variation in subject performance at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form and also further develop the role of subject leaders in fully monitoring the work of the academy.

Safeguarding procedures are good. All requirements, including child protection and mandatory staff checks are fully in place. The academy makes a good contribution to community cohesion; pupils' diversity is respected and valued, and relationships are harmonious. The academy's partnership work with, for example, the local authority, local independent schools and academies and higher education institutions, is central to the academy's extended community provision. The academy is also recognised as an International School by the British Council.

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Governors are very well informed and use their expertise to both support and challenge the academy, monitoring its performance very effectively.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge which are broadly in line with those typical for their age, although language and literacy skills are often weaker. Almost all make good progress as they move through Nursery and Reception so that by the time children enter Year 1, most have met or exceeded the early learning goals.

Teaching is of good quality, with teachers and teaching assistants working exceptionally well together. Language support assistants provide very good support for those children and families who speak English as an additional language. Children are extremely confident in their surroundings and, for the most part, play harmoniously together, enjoying each other's company.

The curriculum is thoughtfully and effectively planned and provides a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. At present, however, children cannot access the outdoor provision immediately adjacent to the Early Years Foundation Stage. This means that children do not currently have the opportunity to initiate outdoor learning and play activities independently and this limits some aspects of their development. Nevertheless, staff make good use of the other outdoor areas on the academy site, engaging children, for example, in nature walks and picnics.

Good leadership and management are evident in the quality of the planning, assessment

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strategies, the active links developed with parents and carers and the highly effective day-to-day organisation which ensures that the setting is welcoming and children are fully engaged in their learning and play.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Sixth form

Students enjoy their time in the sixth form and value highly the advice, support and guidance they receive. They speak positively about the learning ethos and regard the excellent relationships with staff, the house system and sense of community as key strengths. Their active participation as prefects, working with younger pupils, and their involvement in community work make a significant contribution to their personal development.

Provision is satisfactory overall and continuing to develop well. The sixth form is oversubscribed and a high proportion of students continue into higher education. Overall, A-level pass rates at expected and higher levels were broadly maintained in 2009, with students making satisfactory progress given their attainment before they started their sixth form courses. Nonetheless, the academy recognises the need for greater consistency in subject performance and in the use of assessment information to track student progress in both Years 12 and 13 to further improve outcomes, particularly at AS level.

Leadership of the sixth form is currently satisfactory. The introduction of new subject choices, the review of entry criteria and the continuing work of the progression tutors in each year group, working alongside form tutors, are helping to ensure that the academy is fully able to maximise student performance.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

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Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received questionnaire responses from approximately 11% of parents and carers. Analysis indicates that most are happy with their children's experience at the academy, with a very large majority indicating that the academy makes sure their children are well prepared for the future, deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour and keeps their children safe. Few parents and carers made negative comments, although a very small minority did not consider that the academy helped them to support their children's learning. Inspectors are satisfied that the academy is making good efforts to help parents and carers support their children through parents' evenings, regular reporting procedures, a variety of communication strategies and informal discussion opportunities with academy staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at William Hulme's Grammar School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 876 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	49	48	50	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	58	36	38	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	35	52	54	5	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	43	45	47	8	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	44	47	49	5	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	28	52	54	12	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	31	59	61	5	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	43	45	43	45	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	33	55	57	4	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	39	54	56	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	30	54	56	8	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	37	39	45	47	6	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	41	48	50	6	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of William Hulme's Grammar School, Manchester, M16 8PR

Following our inspection of your academy, we would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for speaking to us in lessons and at social times about your experiences. As well as looking at your work, we also read the questionnaires that you completed and those from your parents and carers and the academy staff. These proved very helpful.

You are proud of your academy and you told us how much you appreciate the way that your teachers work with you to help you to achieve the best in all you do.

We are very pleased to tell you that your academy provides you with a good and improving education. This is a summary of our main findings which we hope will be of interest to you.

- Your academy is very well led and managed and is in a strong position to improve further.
- You make good progress with, overall, above average results in national tests and examinations.
- You receive good care, support and guidance and the academy is a safe place to work and learn.
- Teaching is good overall and continuing to improve further.
- The curriculum, including enrichment and extra-curricular activities, is also good and is well matched to your needs, interests and aspirations.

So that the academy continues to improve, we have asked Mr Mulholland and the governors to:

- ensure that assessment information is used more precisely in lessons so that pupils are clear what level they are working at and what they need to do to improve further
- use the best practice within the academy to further develop the work of middle leaders and increase their impact on pupils' performance
- improve the overall effectiveness of the sixth form by:
 - eliminating the variability in subject performance
 - strengthening further the quality of provision and leadership

- ensure that the planned improvements to the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage are implemented as quickly as possible.

Thank you again for your help during the inspection. We hope you continue to enjoy your time at the academy and wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely

Angela M Headon

Her Majesty's Inspector

On behalf of the inspection team

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