

Westbourne Academy

Marlow Road, Ipswich, IP1 5JN

Inspection dates 10–11 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The academy’s first GCSE results in 2013 were poor. Despite marked improvement in 2014, students’ learning and achievement are not yet good.
- Although standards at GCSE rose in 2014, and were broadly average in mathematics, they were below average in English.
- Despite recent improvement, teaching is not good enough across different subjects to ensure that students achieve well, and that they make up for their often low starting points.
- Although assessment is regular, teachers do not always make effective use of assessment, marking and homework to improve students’ achievement.
- The work set in lessons for students, including the most able, sometimes fails to challenge or interest them enough to ensure rapid learning. In such cases, they do not always display good behaviour or productive attitudes to learning and safety.
- The curriculum does not fully meet the needs of some groups, particularly disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Not all subject leaders are doing enough to drive improvements in teaching and standards.
- Although support staff are included in the school’s system to manage and improve staff performance, training opportunities lag behind those for teaching staff.

The school has the following strengths

- The strong leadership of the new Principal, with effective support from the academy trust and its governors, has already led to improvements in behaviour and teaching. Students are making increasingly good progress as a result.
- Good pastoral care and support help to keep students safe.
- Students who speak English as an additional language help to support and settle new students who arrive speaking little or no English.
- The academy promotes students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This helps to ensure that they are well prepared for life in modern British society.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors collected evidence about teaching and learning by observing 40 lessons, looking at students' work and discussing it with them to check on their understanding and attitudes to learning. They also looked at students' work with senior and subject leaders. Eight of the lessons seen were observed together with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors also observed a variety of activities to support individual learners and small groups of students, including visits to tutor time. An inspector listened to students reading. An inspector attended an assembly.
- The inspectors held meetings with the principal and vice principal, members of the governing body, representatives of the academy trust, staff, and four groups of students.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of the 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to an inspection questionnaire from 20 staff. They also took account of the academy's own surveys of the views of parents and students.
- The inspectors looked at the academy's evaluation of its own work and its development plan, data on students' attainment and progress, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, a wide range of policies and procedures, and the arrangements for the safeguarding of students.

Inspection team

Michael Sutherland-Harper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Stanton	Additional Inspector
Vanessa Love	Additional Inspector
Brenda Watson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is slightly larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Westbourne Academy converted to become an academy on 1 February 2013. It subsequently became part of the Academy Transformation Trust in April 2013. The academy also works collaboratively with a number of local primary and secondary schools.
- A very small number of Key Stage 4 students are educated away from the school at Suffolk 1 College or the Avenue Project in Ipswich, local providers of work-related education.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, at around 29%, is above the national average.
- The large majority of the students are of White British heritage.
- Some students join the academy partway through their secondary school education. Many of these students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium, at around 33%, is above the national average. This is additional government funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The Principal has been in post since September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, achievement and behaviour, and close attainment gaps more rapidly, by:
 - providing activities in lessons that consistently engage and challenge all groups of students, including the most able
 - giving all groups the help and guidance necessary to ensure they achieve well, in lessons and through marking and feedback on their work
 - reviewing the use of homework to ensure that it consolidates learning.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that subject leaders have the skills they need to drive improvement
 - developing the curriculum to meet the needs of all students, particularly disabled students and those who have special educational needs
 - providing better training opportunities for support staff.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **requires improvement**

- Senior leadership has strengthened since the academy opened, establishing higher expectations and leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and in students' behaviour. However, subject leadership is not yet strong enough to ensure consistently high standards
- The academy has tightened its procedures to ensure that subject leaders' work and expectations are consistently high. A well focused expectations plan has been shared with subject leaders as part of their development, but has not yet been implemented fully. Subject leaders are held accountable for results and the progress of their students. They must produce improvement plans for their areas and report to assistant heads, who liaise with governors.
- Building on the work started by his predecessor, the new Principal is driving improvement forward at an increasingly rapid rate. Working closely with senior leaders, staff and governors, he has raised expectations of students' behaviour and achievement. Some recent actions have not yet had a full impact, but leaders' broadly accurate self-evaluation and increasing staff accountability mean the academy is well placed to continue to improve quickly.
- Procedures for the management of staff performance have been tightened in conjunction with guidelines from the academy trust. Teachers' pay rises and promotion are linked appropriately to the progress students make. Their individual targets are linked to priorities in the academy improvement plan and have clear success criteria. Support staff are not yet fully included in this process.
- The curriculum requires improvement. Leaders recognise that it does not yet prepare all groups of students well for their future careers. They are carrying out an extensive review against the new national guidelines, including through work-related links with outside providers. Leaders rigorously monitor the progress, behaviour and attendance of students who study at other sites.
- Pupil premium funding is being used with increasing effectiveness to close attainment gaps for eligible students through one-to-one tuition and small group work. Although they are still behind other students, the gaps are now closing at a faster rate. Leaders are thoroughly reviewing the effectiveness of the support provided for them so that it can be refined. Year 7 'catch-up' funding is used effectively to boost the progress of new students in Key Stage 3 who arrive with limited skills in English and mathematics.
- The academy has comprehensively reviewed the way disabled students and those who have special educational needs are catered for in order to improve the effectiveness of support. It is well on the way to implementing the new national strategy for this group of students. They are not yet doing as well as other groups.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted particularly well. It is reinforced by high-quality displays around the site. Students are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They understand different cultures through their interaction with each other, know right from wrong, embrace diversity and respect each other. Careers advice and guidance from the strong pastoral team help students to make the right choices.
- Procedures to safeguard students meet all current national requirements.
- The academy makes good use of links with other institutions. Officers from the academy trust visit regularly to monitor improvement, and give practical support through training and advice on the effectiveness of strategies applied. Good links with other member institutions in the trust allow for sharing of ideas and best classroom practice to promote more rapid achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring a good range of experience to their roles and are committed to making the academy better. As one said, 'We are keen to step up to the plate.' They visit regularly, and their support and challenge are reflected in the records of governing body meetings. The Chair and Vice Chair of the

Governing Body meet regularly with the principal to review improvements.

- Governors have a very good understanding of performance data and their analysis enables them to ask the right questions so that the academy continues to move forward.
- Governors are trained in safer recruitment to ensure that staff are always suitable. They make sure safeguarding procedures meet all current national requirements, and are rigorous and effective.
- The governors use information about pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged students can thrive, in line with the staff's determination that there should be no discrimination of any sort and that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Governors know how well students are taught through visits, when they discuss with staff, students and parents the progress made in studies and areas for further improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. They generally behave well as they move around the academy, but their attitudes in lessons and tutor groups sometimes require improvement. Students wear their uniform with pride. The absence of litter and graffiti also reflects their improving behaviour.
- Students say that attitudes to learning have greatly improved. They are now more punctual to lessons, although some still arrive late. They generally arrive with the right equipment and settle to work quickly. They understand the systems to promote good learning and behaviour, exemplified in the 'Westbourne Way' code. This is now displayed prominently around the academy so that expectations are consistently high. These improvements are not yet fully embedded, and in some of the sessions observed, students did not pay full attention or chatted with each other when they should have been getting on with their work.
- The academy is a harmonious community, whose members support each other well. For example, students who speak English as an additional language serve as ambassadors, helping new arrivals to understand what the academy stands for and how to fit seamlessly into their new setting. This helps to ensure that there is no discrimination and students are prepared well for entry into modern British society.
- Effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps students to meet the demands of the world around them. This includes suitable consideration of the effects of extremist behaviour.
- Attendance has improved overall since the same period last year. It is now approaching the national average as a result of ongoing work with students and families, especially to reduce the rate of persistent absence which has fallen for most groups. Attendance and punctuality are tracked closely and the number of late arrivals has fallen dramatically. However, school records show that attendance has not yet improved for all students groups.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement. Students feel safe and their parents agree. The site is secure and visitors are carefully checked. Students know how to keep themselves safe in the academy and when they are educated off-site, supported by appropriate risk assessments, but do not always apply their understanding rigorously in practical lessons.
- Students say that there is little bullying in the academy and the situation is improving. They are aware of the different forms that bullying may take, such as internet and homophobic bullying. Strong pastoral systems now mean that students always have someone to whom they can speak about any issues, but these are recent changes and records still show occasional incidents taking place, particularly in Key Stage 3. The academy is currently working on further improving students' understanding of the effects of racist bullying.
- Permanent and fixed-term exclusions have generally been dropping, although they rose initially as the academy implemented clearer expectations for behaviour and attendance, and this has not yet stabilised. Leaders promptly address any inappropriate behaviour. This means that the possibility of behaviour leading to exclusions is tackled at an early stage and issues are generally nipped in the bud.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching is rising, it is not yet consistently good or better. Staff expectations are not yet consistently high enough to ensure standards are high across different subject areas.
- Students are not always engaged by the work set when the level of challenge, particularly for the most able, does not promote the highest standards. In these lessons, some low-level disruption slows the pace at which students learn.
- Teachers assess students' understanding regularly in lessons and marking, so students know how well they have done. However, they do not show students so effectively what they need to do next to consolidate their skills. Homework is not used consistently to reinforce the work going on in the classroom.
- Where learning is at its most effective, teachers deepen students' knowledge, make them eager to learn more and help them to develop a range of skills. Together with good advice and guidance about continuing their education, this prepares students carefully for their future careers and builds on their interests.
- In a Year 7 Spanish lesson, students made rapid progress with learning and using verbs linked to sport. The teacher demonstrated high expectations, asked probing questions about activities the students liked to do, and praised all efforts. Within a short time, students were interested and using Spanish naturally to communicate.
- Students educated on other sites make similar progress to their peers. Leaders check that the courses match their interests and abilities and are of a high standard, and that their attendance is in line with the academy's expectations.
- The academy has given more attention to raising the quality of teaching in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. Consequently, students now benefit from faster development of their skills. The learning resource centre provides a welcoming environment in which to read. Students' good reading skills are reinforced by good use of Year 7 'catch-up' funding to promote literacy.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement is not yet consistently good in all subjects or for all groups of students. Rates of progress are increasing at a more rapid rate but some progress gaps remain, for example between disadvantaged students and other students.
- Students' attainment when they join the academy is significantly below average. It was lower for the current Year 11 than for last year's group, but they are now at or approaching a similar level. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2014 improved on the 2013 results. English has been weaker than mathematics and a number of other subjects remained significantly below national averages, although less so than in the past.
- Better progress is not yet a consistent feature across subjects. Progress in mathematics and English was more rapid last year, and current data indicate that it is now rising at a faster rate across the school. However, challenge and expectations, including for the most able, are not yet consistently strong enough to lead to higher attainment in all subjects.
- Students are entered early for mathematics and English examinations. However, this has resulted in a smaller proportion of top grades than nationally, so it has limited the potential of the most able students, a situation the academy is working effectively to address.
- Students like reading and make good use of the library together with opportunities for extended reading to develop their skills. As part of the use of the Year 7 'catch-up' funding, the academy is reviewing and

extending these schemes to make them more effective. Younger students read more than older ones.

- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve less well than their peers. The support provided for them has been reviewed so it can be more efficiently provided where it is most needed. The academy is also reviewing the range of subjects on offer to improve their success rate, given that about half did not meet their targets in 2014. The achievement of this group is picking up, but not yet quickly enough.
- Students who enter the school speaking English as an additional language, often part way through their secondary schooling, make good progress. They are able to engage with the work set because support is provided in different languages and student ambassadors help their colleagues.
- Disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium made better progress in 2014 than in 2013. The 2014 Year 11 results showed that the gap between the attainment of eligible students and that of other groups in the school had widened to more than two thirds of a grade. However, because results as a whole improved they were less than half a grade behind others nationally in English and mathematics. Support is being refined to ensure that it is consistently effective in closing gaps for all eligible students, for example boys in English.
- The most able students are also making better progress. Data for 2014 show that the number of subjects where students were not reaching the highest levels reduced compared to 2013, but their learning in lessons is not consistently good because of variations in the level of challenge provided. The academy has improved the way it analyses the progress made by students of differing ability, and this is now helping to improve results.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139288
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	451039

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	996
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ron Impey
Principal	Garry Trott
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2012
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