

Whitley Academy

Abbey Road, Whitley, Coventry, CV3 4BD

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- GCSE results have improved since the academy was established and students make outstanding progress in their academic and personal development.
- Teachers have high expectations of students and develop excellent working relationships in the classroom. Students have very positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Teachers make sure that work is well matched to students' needs, enabling them to gain skills, knowledge and understanding rapidly.
- Teachers provide first-class feedback to their students in class about how they can improve their work. Comments in books are not so well focused on helping students to improve.
- Students are proud of their academy. They feel safe and say bullying is uncommon. Students behave extremely well in lessons and around the academy site.
- Excellent provision and guidance for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are central to the school's work.
- The academy has a strong commitment to working with and supporting other schools.
- There are very effective systems in place to check the academy's work. Students' progress is checked regularly and those not making the progress they should are provided with the extra support they need.
- Leaders develop teaching well and staff performance is very effectively managed. Staff are provided with excellent professional development opportunities and this helps to improve their effectiveness.
- The sixth form is good and students make good progress on their post-16 courses. Students receive helpful information, advice and guidance which help them to make well-informed decisions about future employment, education and training.
- The Principal is very ably supported by the senior leadership team. School leaders have a strong track record of improving teaching and achievement.
- The very experienced governing body is exceptionally effective. Governors provide a high level of both support and challenge for the school and are committed to its continued improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 38 lessons, five of which were paired observations carried out with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders, groups of students, and the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone conversation was held with the School Improvement Partner.
- Inspectors reviewed a variety of school documents, including the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and development plans, behaviour records, safeguarding records, governing body documents, and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors also considered the views expressed in 39 questionnaires returned by school staff, but could not take into account anything from the online Parent View survey as there were not enough responses at the time of the inspection.

Inspection team

Steven Cartlidge, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Keith Brown	Additional Inspector
Victoria Bishop	Additional Inspector
Suha Ahmad	Additional Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Whitley Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2011. When its predecessor school, Whitley Abbey and Enterprise College, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is slightly above average.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for particular groups, which in this school applies to students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and the very few looked after by the local authority) is very high.
- The proportion of students receiving extra support through school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of students by the end of Year 11.
- Year 12 students were completing mock examinations during the inspection.
- A small number of students are currently educated and dual registered in a mini pupil referral unit on the school site.
- The Principal is a National Leader of Education (NLE) who is working in partnership with other schools in the region offering support and challenge towards school improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the rate of students' achievement by ensuring that:
 - all marking of students' work provides specific guidance on areas for improvement
 - students are routinely given opportunities to respond to their teachers' comments.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students typically start the school with attainment well below national averages. They make outstanding progress and their attainment, including that of the most able, means the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics is above average when they leave. The school's information, based on accurate internal assessments of how well students are doing, suggests that students are on track to achieve even better results in 2014.
- Use of early entry GCSE mathematics has been very effective in improving attainment. It has also raised these students' self-esteem and their belief that they can succeed. Students make good and often outstanding progress in individual lessons. This is reflected in performance data, which show that the proportion of students making or exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics compares very well to national averages, and is particularly high in English.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make rapid progress because staff identify their individual needs early and arrange the right additional help. Teachers and teaching assistants support students expertly, providing challenge and encouragement, and helping them with subject-specific vocabulary.
- High standards and rates of progress in Key Stage 4 are also reflected in Key Stage 3, where standards and rates of progress for all groups of pupils are improving rapidly.
- There is no significant difference between the achievements of students from different ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language.
- A small number of students attend alternative courses away from the academy. Leaders monitor the quality of this provision carefully and those students progress well.
- Lesson observations show that students are highly motivated and keen to do well in the vast majority of their lessons, resulting in their very positive progress. For example, in a Year 10 French lesson, students displayed great enthusiasm, demonstrating to their classmates their language skills interpreting accurately aspects of charitable organisations. They then became totally engrossed in identifying and correcting their own mistakes.
- The school is making very good use of its pupil premium funding. Extra staffing, one-to-one tuition and funding for additional educational resources, for example, are helping students to make very good and sustained progress. As a result, the gap in English and mathematics between these students' attainment and that of their classmates narrowed slightly to less than half a GCSE grade in 2013.
- For the students in Year 7 who are eligible for support through the catch-up premium because they are struggling with literacy and numeracy skills, the school has accurate tracking systems which are used to direct specific support. As a result, the school's reliable data show that these students are making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Achievement in the small sixth form is good and results are improving. By the end of the sixth form, results are at least in line with, and some above, national average for most subjects. Results are typically stronger in vocational subjects. The school's predictions for all post-16 courses, based on accurate assessments of how well students are doing, show that sixth form

students are on track to achieve much improved results in 2014.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is good and often outstanding. This was confirmed during the inspection, where the teaching observed was consistently highly effective in capturing students' interest and engagement.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. Teachers are successful in motivating students, including the most able. They provide a range of tasks that encourage students to want to succeed. Students are also keen to live up to the expectations of the adults around them and their positive attitudes to learning contribute much to their outstanding progress. This was particularly noticeable, for example, in an English lesson, where students in Year 8 had the opportunity to practise their literacy skills. The students demonstrated outstanding understanding of the characters of *Romeo and Juliet* by investigating increasingly complex evidence, and were able to show a clear understanding of the strategies needed to develop their work to reach the highest level.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs receive high-quality support in lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively and help is matched well to students' needs. This close coordination among staff ensures that the students make good or better progress in all subjects.
- Teachers provide high-quality constructive feedback to students verbally but written feedback, in the form of marking, is more variable. In the best practice, teachers' written comments, which show students what they need to do to improve their work, often contribute to the progress that students make. Students value this kind of feedback, particularly when they are given the opportunity to reflect and respond to the comments. However, this practice is not yet consistent across the school.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers ensure that students understand key subject ideas that will enable them to achieve good grades. Sixth-form students receive outstanding information, support and guidance. Students take responsibility for monitoring their own progress against personal targets, and they collaborate well in helping each other achieve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students take great pride in their school, have highly positive attitudes to learning and are very keen to do their best in class. They listen carefully to the explanations of staff and to the ideas of others. This is very well illustrated in a drama lesson by Year 10 students, who avidly listened to each other's ideas about a Pantomime performance taking place that evening, and then animatedly joined in discussions about the strengths and areas for improvement each had.
- Students' movement around the school and behaviour in lessons are calm, considerate and courteous at all times. School surveys show that the vast majority of parents and carers agree that their children are safe and happy in school, and are very positive about behaviour in the school.
- Students say that bullying is very rare but, when it does occur, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Students are aware of the different types of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying and cyber-bullying, and know what to do if it occurs.

- The school makes every effort to provide a safe and secure environment that is valued and appreciated by everyone. Students display an excellent understanding of the issues relating to safety. They talk very confidently about how they would keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, such as using the internet and social networking sites.
- Attendance has improved since the academy opened and is now at the national average. Leaders are effectively maintaining this position and are focusing on families who struggle to get their children to school, making clear the effect absence has on their children's progress and attainment.
- Sixth-form students make a very worthwhile contribution to the life of the school; for example, by contributing to a wide range of extra-curricular activities and offering support for younger students.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Teachers and governors are ambitious for the school to do well. The Principal, who is a National Leader of Education, provides very determined leadership, promoting a clear focus on continual improvement, including the sixth-form. She drives school improvement, with a clearly articulated vision for the future.
- The academy also makes an effective contribution to improving the performance of other schools in the region by sharing advanced skills practitioners contributing advice on best practice.
- Since the academy opened, the leadership team has established rigorous procedures to check on the quality of teaching and provide support for any staff identified as underperforming. As a result, standards in 2013 have risen in, for example, English, modern foreign languages and geography. Likewise, in the sixth form, a strengthening of leadership and management has benefited students, who have, consequently, shown improved attainment and progress in most of their post-16 courses and those in Year 12 who have begun their study programmes.
- The analysis of students' progress and accurate self-evaluation of the school's work provide all teachers, and the governing body, with a clear understanding of the school's performance, including that of the sixth form. This information ensures that improvement planning is sharply focused on identified weaknesses. The benefit can be seen, for example, in the successful action taken last year to raise attainment in English, and demonstrates the academy's capacity for continued improvement.
- The leadership of teaching is outstanding and the academy places a high priority on improving teaching through high-quality training. Teachers' performance is checked and information is used from lesson observations, and from information about students' progress, to set teachers targets for improvement. There is a clear understanding that decisions about promotion and pay rates will be based on the impact of teaching on students' progress.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively and has helped develop the role of the teaching assistants. Students identified as in need of additional support, including those eligible for pupil premium funding, Year 7 catch-up funding, and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are well supported. The academy evaluates its expenditure on the support provided through data showing how well students achieve, which show that all groups are now making similarly rapid progress to that of their classmates.

- School leaders ensure that different groups of pupils have an equal chance to succeed, and they tackle effectively any instances of discrimination.
- The range of subjects and topics taught promotes a highly positive attitude to learning among students in all subjects and leads to students achieving exceptionally well. The curriculum has been carefully designed around students' interests and abilities. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. They receive high-quality information, support and guidance to enable them to make choices of career and of higher education.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effectively promoted by a very broad range of arts, drama, music and sports activities, as well as by visits to other places in this country and abroad. Year on year, students have raised a considerable sum of money in order to help Children in Need.
- The academy commissions the support it needs very effectively. For example, the School Improvement Partner, an independent consultant, has provided well-targeted support for school leaders. Subject leaders are well supported in developing their leadership and management skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very well informed. It challenges the academy leaders and holds them to account for students' achievement. By using the data available, it compares school performance with that of schools nationally. Governors also strongly support the academy and its leaders. They have a deep insight into the quality of teaching and its impact on students' learning. They manage the performance of staff effectively and are rigorous in ensuring that the salary progression of staff is justified by the outcome of students' progress and achievement. Governors check carefully on the use of additional funds from the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up in improving the achievement of eligible students. Explanation and action from leaders and managers are called for when performance does not advance as intended. The governing body oversees the management of finance and resources expertly. Governors rigorously check safeguarding practice and, as a result, safeguarding procedures meet current legal requirements.

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	136840
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	427135

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	819
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Downing
Headteacher	Lorraine Allen
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	02476 302580
Fax number	02476 639352
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