

Garforth Academy

Lidgett Lane, Garforth, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS25 1LJ

Inspection dates 5–6 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.

- Academic standards have been well-above average for a number of years.
- The most-able students in the school achieve well and gain the highest grades in their GCSEs in a range of subjects.
- Rates of progress in English and mathematics for the large majority of students are at least good and often outstanding.
- All groups of students achieve well including disabled students and those who have special educational needs and students in receipt of pupil premium funding.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Excellent teaching is driving up standards and rapidly accelerating progress. Achievement is good and improving strongly although students in Year 13 do not make as much progress as those in Year 12.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding because teachers have exceptional skills.
- Teachers have high expectations of their students and only their best work is good enough.
- Teachers are expert in their subject areas and inspire their students to be enthusiastic, motivated learners.
- Lessons are meticulously planned and work matches the needs of individual pupils exactly.
- Teachers mark books regularly and well but sometimes they do not check whether students have responded to their comments.
- Students' behaviour in the classroom is typically impeccable. They are more than pleased to help each other out in lessons and to work hard.
- The aspirational leadership of teaching has ensured that the proportion of outstanding teaching continues to grow. Teachers are incredibly well supported and as a result are extremely keen to improve their performance.
- The crystal clear ambition of the Principal is palpable. His vision for the future of the academy is that it should be the very best.
- The governing body plays a key role in driving through improvements in the school. They are very knowledgeable and offer astute challenge and support.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 42 lessons or part lessons taught by teachers. Members of the senior leadership team accompanied the inspectors on six visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with the Chief Executive Officer CEO of the 'Schools Partnership Trust', pupils, members of the governing body, the senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors took account of the 49 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took into account the 63 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documents including the school's own records of pupils' progress and attainment, monitoring documents, records relating to the performance management of staff and those relating to behaviour, safeguarding, attendance and the pupil premium.

Inspection team

Glynis Bradley-Peat, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Derek Barnes	Additional Inspector
Tudor Griffiths	Additional Inspector
Janice Gorch	Additional Inspector
Paul Rafferty	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average-sized secondary school.
- A smaller proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs are supported through school action than found nationally. The proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of students receiving pupil premium, which is additional funding given for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children with parents in the armed forces, is much lower than the national average.
- The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Currently, the academy does not offer any alternative off-site provision but works in partnership with local businesses to run the academy hair and beauty salon.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon the good work already started to ensure that:
 - all students respond effectively to teachers' written comments in their exercise books
 - the good progress students make in Year 13 matches the outstanding progress made in other year groups.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Results in 2013 show that the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at A* to C including English and mathematics has remained significantly above average over time. An above average proportion of students gain the highest grades in a variety of subjects including English, mathematics and science. This is because the most-able students often make outstanding rates of progress.
- Most students make sustained and rapid progress because of the excellent teaching they receive in a range of subjects. Progress in humanities, modern foreign languages and the arts is also outstanding because the individual needs of students are met exceptionally well. They are challenged highly effectively, which ensures that they reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Relationships between teachers and students are particularly strong. Students trust their teachers implicitly and as a result engage enthusiastically in their lessons. This promotes excellent progress. In a Year 10 English lesson, the teacher's down to earth approach to teaching a variety of sentence structures kept students keen and interested. Well thought-through practical activities systematically improved the quality of students' writing.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs have every opportunity to succeed and to reach their potential as part of a very inclusive and caring school experience. Information about their performance is used very well by all staff and teachers support all learners with well-focused planning and make the very best use of any additional resource that is available. This has promoted outstanding progress. This group of students achieve particularly well in the sixth form.
- Students achieve well in the sixth form although they make more rapid progress in Year 12 than in Year 13. Students make particularly marked progress in psychology and art and design. The progress seen during lesson observations and in students' work across a range of subjects was outstanding in both academic and vocational subject areas. Students studying the 1960s in history made rapid progress because teaching was outstanding and ensured that students were able to truly relate to the subject matter. They were able to talk at length about how the growth in the supply of material goods affected people's expectations.
- The academy pays careful attention to the achievement of those students in receipt of free school meals and supported by pupil premium funding. As a result, the attainment gap in English and mathematics between these students and their peers has closed to within half of a GCSE grade. A number of effective small group classes are in place across the year groups which boosts students' performance effectively. In addition, the academy has provided one-to-one guidance and advice in the 'Excellence Centre', which has enabled students to learn more successfully.
- Careful consideration is given to ensure that those students entering early for GCSE mathematics gain the best grade that they can. As a result students are able to enter the sixth form confidently and go on to achieve good grades.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Students make outstanding progress because of outstanding teaching, particularly in the sixth form. Inspectors observed a significant amount of good teaching and much that was outstanding. Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with teachers whose good humour enables them to engage with and be highly motivated by their learning. In history, the teacher rewarded students with 1960s sweets as a reward for correct answers. Students in Year 12 studied electron configuration and said that the teacher made their learning relevant, highly enjoyable and actually 'fun'.

- Teachers plan highly effectively for each and every individual, which ensures that work given to all abilities is challenging. Expectations are high of both academic performance and behaviour so no time is wasted.
- During lessons teachers assess how well students are learning and change what they are doing when appropriate as a result. In Year 9 information technology, the teacher quickly realised that some of the least-able students were struggling with justifying which type of chart they should use and why. The teacher's careful questioning ensured students were able to articulate more clearly and give a clear evaluation.
- Lessons are characterised by a range of interesting activities which motivate and engage the interest of learners. Many of these activities are undertaken in groups, which promotes students' independent learning skills. In physics in Year 13, students worked extremely well together to investigate Charles' Law and to explain its ramifications. Students discussed and challenged each other supportively and clearly wanted to work things out for themselves. They questioned each other speculatively in order to refine their findings.
- A common feature of all lessons was the excellent subject knowledge of the teachers. As a result teachers are able to challenge and extend students' learning spontaneously. In a Year 8 English lesson a matching task ensured students were fully engaged in improving their writing by developing their use of imagery. Students were fully challenged by the teacher's expert probing questioning and made outstanding progress as a result.
- Teachers provide clear advice about how students can make their work better during lessons. Much of this feedback is verbal and students act immediately on the action points. However, sometimes, they do not always respond as well to the comments teachers write in their exercise books. This is because teachers do not always check and follow up on their previous marking.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students have excellent attitudes to learning and clearly enjoy coming to the academy. High rates of attendance ensure that every opportunity is taken to learn as much as possible. Students are confident, mature young people who are keen to engage in school life to the full. This contributes highly effectively to the consistently good and often outstanding progress that many of them make. Students say, 'School helps us to aim high in many ways.'
- Students say that they feel very safe in the academy and in the words of one this is because, 'I am a person not a number.' Students say that they never feel alone and that they always have someone to go to if the need arises. The online 'worry box' is used by students to bring up any issues they may have.
- Students are considerate of each other, their teachers and visitors to the school. They know the rewards and sanctions in place in the academy to ensure good behaviour. Behaviour in the classroom is typically exemplary. On the odd occasion where behaviour is not up to its usual high standard, teachers manage it skilfully and no learning time is lost.
- Bullying incidents are uncommon and one student spoke at length about her own experience. Teachers were said to have helped and supported well. Students praise the way staff are always present in the corridors during break and lunchtime. Students have a thorough understanding of the different forms bullying can take and understand how they can deal with instances in order to keep themselves safe.
- The student council plays an active part in the life of the academy, participating fully in the decision-making process. Good opportunities are provided for team working and debate. They have enjoyed working with the Leeds Youth Council and the UK Youth Parliament. A recent visit to the Houses of Parliament provided an opportunity to learn about the role of an MP and the workings of Parliament. This contributes well to students' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Outstanding leadership at all levels, including teachers in their own classrooms, is at the very heart of this academy's success. The Principal's extremely clear view of 'being the best' is universally shared by all members of the school community.
- The quality of departmental and pastoral leadership is exemplary and focuses its energy on ensuring that every student gets the chance to succeed. The school has a working mantra that is heard at every level and is clearly understood by all middle leaders, 'Getting better never stops.' They believe that they are able to lead and develop their own teams along a known and collectively shared ideal that the school can be the very best. Staff display high levels of confidence and perform very effectively as a result.
- Information about students' attainment and progress is used exceptionally well to target those individuals who are not doing as well as they could. Resources are deployed highly effectively to accelerate progress and to narrow the gaps between groups of students within the academy.
- The academy evaluates its own performance accurately as outstanding. Teaching is led and managed extremely well; teaching which requires improvement is challenged and supported in equal measure. The quality of teaching is checked regularly and any relatively weaker elements are identified. An effective training programme for teachers ensures these areas are tackled and improved. There is a solid link between how well teachers teach and their salary progression.
- The new leadership structure of the sixth form is having a striking impact on the quality of provision. Aspirations and expectations are high for all their students. There is no hiding place for students who are not making progress. The causes of difficulty are identified and measures put in place to secure improvement. The team is driven by its aspiration for the students. Their impact on, and leadership of the sixth form, is transformational.
- The curriculum is regularly adjusted to ensure that the needs of students are met as well as possible. The academy has invested in a range of its own off-site resource bases including a shop in the high street for hair and beauty students. The provision is delivered in partnership with local employers. This prepares students well for the next stage of their education and employment. There is a wide range of extra-curricular clubs including sport, music and subject-specific clubs. Students are able to visit places of interest and go away on academy trips abroad.
- The academy works well with parents and regularly seeks their views. Almost a half of parents returned the academy's most recent questionnaire, which is a much higher proportion than normally found. This, taken alongside the results of the online survey, Parent View, show that the school works successfully to engage all parents. The academy always takes a pro-active stance as it is keen to know the views of all stakeholders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors play an integral part in school life, challenging and supporting leaders and always require explanations that satisfy their questions. They pay attention to detail and check out all information given to them by the academy carefully.
 - Their clear understanding of what the performance data show stands them in good stead to hold leaders to account for the standards and progress of students in the academy. They have a good appreciation of the link between pay progression and the quality of teaching. Only those teachers who are typically at least good receive pay increases.
 - Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent and know whether it is making a difference. For example, they can explain how the gap has narrowed between groups of pupils in the academy.
 - The governing body is keen to ensure that students are safe in the academy and carry out their statutory duties diligently. Safeguarding requirements are currently fully met.

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	136343
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	427203

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
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	1,952
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	434
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Addy
Headteacher	Paul West
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0113 336 8600
Fax number	0113 287 2727
Email address	info@schoolpartnershiptrust.org.uk

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