

Weavers Academy

Brickhill Road, Wellingborough, NN8 3JH

Inspection dates 3–4 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching and achievement in the main academy and the sixth form are not consistently good.
- Some teachers do not plan work that is well matched to students' skills and abilities, particularly boys and those students who are disadvantaged.
- Teachers' marking and feedback do not always show students how to improve their work.
- Teachers do not check students' work regularly enough in lessons. As a result, students are not moved on to harder work quickly enough.
- Some teaching assistants do not have the skills to support disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Students do not all show good attitudes to learning.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students do not achieve as well as they should, particularly the most-able students. In 2014, the sixth form failed to meet the government's minimum expectations for students' achievement in vocational courses.
- Too many sixth form students leave their courses early in Year 12 because they do not receive good enough advice about which courses to study.
- Too few students who re-take GCSE mathematics in the sixth form achieve a good pass grade.
- Leaders do not check teaching and the achievement of different groups of students in sufficient detail. Their expectations of what students are capable of achieving are not ambitious enough.
- Not all subject leaders have been well enough trained to check on the quality of teaching and students' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The academy is beginning to improve. Students are making better progress because teaching is improving, including in English and mathematics.
- Students feel safe at school and the academy's work in this area is good.
- Students attend regularly and attendance is above average.
- The academy provides good support for students' personal development and well-being.
- The curriculum is improving and is more accurately matched to students' abilities and interests than it was in the first year of the academy.
- The relatively new governing body has a detailed and accurate understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. It holds academy leaders to account effectively for their plans and actions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 35 lessons, 13 of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. The inspection team made several short visits to other lessons to check on the progress and behaviour of different groups of students. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of work in students' books.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students from all year groups. Other meetings were held with members of the governing body and with senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects. The lead inspector met with two representatives from the sponsor.
- Inspectors analysed the 33 responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the school's development plan and data on students' progress.
- Inspectors were unable to observe any Year 12 lessons as students had completed their courses.

Inspection team

Richard Sutton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lisa Crausby	Additional Inspector
Susan Howe	Additional Inspector
Christine Ockendon	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is part of a multi academy trust called The Creative Education Trust. The academy opened on 1 September 2013.
- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students of minority ethnic heritage is below-average.
- One in 10 students speak English as an additional language, which is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is a little below average.
- The pupil premium, which is additional funding given to schools for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, provides support for one in three students. This is an above-average proportion.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- A small number of students attend Moulton College, Rushmere Academy and Fairlawns Academy for part of each week to study vocational courses or receive support for particular behavioural or emotional needs.
- The Principal joined the academy in September 2014.
- The academy works in partnership with a group of local schools called The Five Wells Teaching School Alliance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement in Years 7 to 11, particularly for boys and disadvantaged students, by ensuring that:
 - teachers set work that is appropriately challenging and accurately matched to the different skills and abilities of students
 - marking and feedback always shows students how to improve their work, and teachers check that students have acted on the advice they are given
 - students' work is regularly checked in lessons so that they can improve it and are moved on to harder work as soon as they are ready.
- Raise achievement in the sixth form by:
 - making sure that work is always challenging enough, particularly for the most-able students
 - improving attainment in vocational subjects by ensuring that teachers accurately assess all the various units of work that students complete
 - improving attainment in GCSE mathematics by making sure that students study an appropriate course which is well matched to the students' abilities
 - improving the quality of information, advice and guidance that students receive before joining the sixth form so that more complete their courses.
- Increasing the impact that leaders and managers have on improving teaching and achievement throughout the academy by:
 - robustly checking teaching and achievement regularly so that any gaps in the achievement of different groups of students and weaknesses in teaching are tackled quickly
 - making sure that the targets that are set for all students to achieve are appropriately challenging
 - ensuring that all subject leaders are well trained so that they have the skills to check effectively on the quality of teaching and on students' achievement
 - improving the skills of teaching assistants.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- During the academy's first year, the efforts of leaders and managers to improve teaching and achievement had little impact. However, since the start of this academic year, they have begun to have greater impact on improving the academy, though the rate of improvement is not as rapid as it needs to be.
- Leaders do not have high enough expectations of what all students should be achieving. The targets that are set for many students, including those in the sixth form, are not ambitious enough, and this results in teaching which is not always sufficiently challenging. As a result, not all students have the same opportunities as others to succeed and achieve their full potential.
- Leaders check on the quality of teaching and on students' achievement. However, these checks are not frequent enough for weaknesses to be identified and tackled quickly. In particular, leaders do not check any differences in the achievement of the various different groups of students in as much detail as they should. Although beginning to improve, this is an important reason why boys are achieving less well than girls and why disadvantaged students are not catching up with other students as quickly as they could.
- The work that subject leaders do to improve teaching and learning is not consistently good. Some subject leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility because they are skilled at checking teaching and achievement and are able to implement appropriate actions which are resulting in teaching which is more often good. However, other subject leaders have not received sufficient training to do this effectively.
- Leaders have not made sure that teaching assistants are well trained to support students. This is an important reason why some disabled students and those who have special educational needs do not make consistently good progress.
- Although there is further to go, the leadership of teaching is improving. Teachers benefit from a range of opportunities to share their skills with each other through the 'learning communities' and through training which involves observing each other teaching.
- The impact of the academy's additional funds, such as the pupil premium, is showing signs of some improvement following a governing body review earlier this year. Gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged students and others in the academy are beginning to narrow. However, during the academy's first year the funding was not used well and there were wide gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged students and others in Year 11.
- The leadership of support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs requires improvement because these students do not consistently make good progress. Leaders do not check how good teaching and achievement are for these students as frequently and in as much detail as they should.
- An important reason why students in Year 11 underachieved in 2014 is that leaders changed several courses that the majority of students were studying at the start of Year 11, including information technology, business studies and English. As a result, students had insufficient time to study the subjects and teachers were not adequately trained to teach the courses. However, the curriculum has improved this year because it is better matched to the interests and abilities of students. The curriculum has a good impact on the personal development of students, including those in the sixth form, as well as their understanding of safety matters. Students in all year groups have an adequate understanding of British values, which are taught across the whole curriculum. The study of topics such as human rights and British law contributes to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders check the progress and attendance of the small number of students who study at other institutions.
- Students benefit from appropriate careers information and guidance, which is taught from Year 7. Students have opportunities, for example, to explore their future careers options as well as research GCSE and A-level courses. However, the guidance offered to students who are considering joining the sixth form requires improvement. Too many students leave their courses during Year 12 because they are not

following courses that are well matched to their skills, interests and abilities.

- Leaders have ensured that the vast majority of students and staff show a good level of respect for each other. Relationships across the academy are positive and there is no hint of discrimination anywhere in the academy.
- Checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are comprehensive. All staff have received training on a wide range of safety matters. Key staff are also trained to identify any students who may be at risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- The sponsor's representatives have a detailed and accurate understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. The sponsor has provided an appropriately high level of support and challenge to the academy.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body was reconstituted earlier this year after been directed to do so by the sponsor. Members of the governing body now have a good range of skills, which means that they have a strong understanding of students' achievement data, for example. The improvements to the governing body are too recent, however, to show their full impact.
 - The governing body has an accurate understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses and it has started to hold leaders to account for their actions and plans. It is determined to accelerate improvement in the academy.
 - Governors know about the impact of other additional funds, such as the Year 7 'catch-up' funding, and are aware of the good impact this is having for eligible students who find reading difficult. They are similarly aware of the weaker impact that this funding is having in mathematics and have ensured that additional staff appointments are made to further support students in this subject.
 - Governors are appropriately involved in making decisions about whether teachers should receive pay rises, dependant on their students making good progress. The governing body also has appropriate procedures for tackling staff underperformance.
 - The governing body carries out its statutory duties fully. For example, it ensures that the school fulfils statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding: appropriate checks are made on visitors to the academy, and all staff have been checked as required and are trained to keep students safe and free from harm.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Behaviour is not consistently good in lessons and it varies between subjects and teachers. Lessons are sometimes disrupted because a small minority of students do not behave as well as they should. Some staff and parents who responded to the questionnaires agree that behaviour is not always good.
- Some students do not demonstrate good attitudes to learning, particularly when teaching is not as good as it should be. In some lessons, students lose concentration because work is not challenging enough and, as a result, they make slower progress.
- Students who attend other institutions on a part-time basis are receiving a good level of support to help them improve their behaviour. Students' reports indicate that many learn to behave well.
- Most students are polite and well mannered, and they dress smartly. Students arrive to school and lessons on time, and they show a good level of respect towards each other as well as the school environment; the site is tidy and free from litter. Students behave sensibly at social times and most show a good level of respect for each other and staff.
- Exclusion rates are below average and serious incidents of misbehaviour are rare.
- Attendance is above average. Students attend school regularly and arrive punctually to lessons. Most

arrive at lessons well prepared, with the appropriate equipment.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students have a good understanding of safety matters, including how to keep safe when working online. Students also understand the risks associated with drugs and alcohol.
- Students are taught about bullying and they are well equipped with strategies to manage bullying should it occur. They understand the different forms that bullying can take, including homophobic and cyber-bullying. Students overwhelmingly agree that bullying is rare and academy records confirm this. They also agree that, when it does happen, staff deal with matters quickly and effectively.
- Leaders ensure that students who attend other institutions for part of the week are safe. For example, they check attendance each day and provide transport from the academy each morning.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching has started to improve, it requires further improvement because students in all year groups do not benefit from consistently good or better teaching. As a result, students' achievement is not always good enough.
- Teachers do not always set work which is at the right level for some students. Work is not always challenging enough for students of all abilities. As a result, students do not regularly have opportunities to demonstrate higher-level skills and knowledge and show that they are making more rapid progress.
- Teachers' marking and feedback does not routinely help students to improve their work because it lacks detail and does not give students sufficient guidance. When teachers do offer guidance on how students can improve their work, they do not always check that students have acted on the advice they are given.
- Students sometimes make slower progress, particularly boys and disadvantaged students, because teachers do not check their work during lessons frequently enough. As a result, students are not moved on to harder work quickly enough and time is lost. In addition, inaccurate work or work that is not at the student's best standard goes unchecked.
- As for other students, teaching for the most-able students is too often not challenging enough. Sometimes these students are not required to work as quickly as they are capable of, and they are not always required to think deeply.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs do not regularly benefit from teaching that caters for these students' particular learning needs. Those students who receive support from teaching assistants do not always receive the specific support that they need because some teaching assistants lack the skills to do this effectively.
- Teachers are benefiting from improved professional development opportunities and these are beginning to have a positive impact on students' achievement. Teaching in English and mathematics is improving and students from all backgrounds are developing stronger skills in these key subjects than was the position during the academy's first year. Teaching is good in the creative arts subjects and physical education.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students who completed Year 11 in 2014 underachieved across many subjects. Overall attainment and progress, including in English and mathematics, was well below average for almost all groups of students. This group of students had much ground to catch up as a result of weak teaching in the past and their time in the academy was limited to just under three terms.
- Other groups of students who have had longer in the academy are starting to make better progress. The academy's own data, which has been checked by external consultants and confirmed as accurate, indicate that students who are currently in Years 10 and 11 are on track to achieve better examination results than

in 2014. Inspection evidence supports this, although students have much ground to make up. The improving achievement is as a result of teaching which is improving and changes made to the curriculum that give students a more appropriate range of subjects to choose for their GCSE courses.

- Progress in Key Stage 3 is improving. For example, many students who are in Year 8 and who have been in the academy since it opened are making good progress in English and mathematics.
- The most-able students do not make as much progress as they should because teachers do not challenge these students enough. The proportion of Year 11 students who achieved the highest grades in 2014 was too low and this represented slow progress for many of these students.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is beginning to improve. For example, in Year 8, a higher proportion of these students are making the progress that is expected in English and mathematics compared to students in older year groups.
- The academy spends the pupil premium funding on additional staff who offer one-to-one or small-group academic and personal support when it is needed. In 2014, disadvantaged students in Year 11 attained results that were, on average, one grade lower in English and two-thirds of a grade lower in mathematics compared to other students in the academy. Compared to all students nationally, students achieved one and a half grades lower in English and a little over a grade lower in mathematics. Gaps in other year groups are starting to narrow when compared to the academy's first year.
- The additional Year 7 'catch-up' funding, which supports students who join the academy below the expected level in English and mathematics, is not used well in mathematics and students are not catching up in this subject as quickly as they should. However, in English, students' reading skills are improving rapidly.
- The progress that the small number of students make while studying at other institutions is not consistently good.
- Students do not take examinations early, which means that they have the full amount of time to study their courses.

The sixth form provision requires improvement

- The sixth form requires improvement because, as a result of teaching which is not consistently good, many students do not achieve the grades that they should across a range of subjects. In particular, many of the most-able students do not achieve the highest grades because work is not always challenging enough for them.
- In 2014, sixth form students did not achieve as well as they should have, and the sixth form fell below the government's minimum expectations for students' achievement. Too few students attained good enough grades in vocational courses, in particular, because their work was not always accurately assessed by teachers. However, the academy's own data, as well as examination board reports, indicate that attainment is beginning to rise.
- Too few students who re-take GCSE mathematics achieve a good pass grade. Leaders have failed to offer students alternative qualifications which meet national requirements. However, pass rates for those students who re-take GCSE English are good.
- Leaders have not ensured that students who are considering joining the sixth form receive high-quality information, advice and guidance to help them decide which courses to study. As a result, too many students left the sixth form last year during Year 12 without completing their courses.
- Sixth form students have good attitudes to learning. Most students work hard and show a good commitment to succeed. Many make an important contribution to the academy. For example, they support younger students with reading.

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	139819
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	450238

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	837
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tania Nightingale
Principal	Christopher Blanch
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01933 222830
Fax number	01933 276347
Email address	enquiries@weaversacademy.org.uk

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