

# Trent Valley Academy

Sweyn Lane, Off Corringham Road, Gainsborough, DN21 1PB

**Inspection dates** 8–9 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that has serious weaknesses

- Achievement is inadequate because too many students, including those who have special educational needs, have not made enough progress, especially in mathematics.
- The academy has not met the government's minimum standard for students' attainment and progress.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are not developed sufficiently well for students in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Although the teaching is improving, it does not yet ensure that a sufficient number of students make consistently good progress.
- Teachers do not always set work that is pitched at the right level for all students or ask sufficiently probing questions to extend students' knowledge and understanding.
- Students do not always receive enough guidance through teachers' marking on how they can improve their work.
- New systems to track students' progress and identify underachievement have yet to have a full impact on their achievement.
- Attendance, although improving, is below the national average.
- Although there have been improvements in behaviour, not all staff apply the behaviour policy consistently.
- The courses taught and the length of lessons do not fully meet the needs of all pupils.
- Although leaders are helping to improve the quality of teaching, their support has yet to ensure that no teaching is inadequate.

### The school has the following strengths

- The interim Principal demonstrates a strong, determined and focused vision for the academy.
- Relationships between students and staff and among students are respectful. Students are well cared for and feel safe.
- Governors and the academy sponsors provide strong support for the school's leaders.
- Staff morale is good because they feel the interim Principal and senior staff are improving systems within the academy.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 36 lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the school’s senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the interim Principal, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, representatives from the sponsors, and groups of students.
- Inspectors reviewed the academy’s documentation, performance data, records in relation to behaviour and attendance, and the school’s central record of checks on staff. They looked at samples of students’ work.
- Inspectors took into account the views of the 22 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered the views of staff, including those expressed in 37 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Christine Young, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Ann Ashdown	Additional Inspector
Richard White	Additional Inspector
Christopher Teal	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.*

### Information about this school

- Trent Valley Academy opened in September 2008 and moved into new buildings in September 2009. It is sponsored by E-ACT.
- This academy is an average-sized secondary school. It operates in an area where some students are selected by ability to attend a grammar school.
- Most students are White British. A well-below-average proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a below-average proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students for whom the academy receives the pupil premium, which is additional funding for students in the care of the local authority, from service families and for those known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above average. There are no students from service families on roll.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A small number of students join and leave the academy part way through their education.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy makes use of part-time alternative provision off site for 17 students in Years 10 and 11 who attend Lincoln College, where they study vocational courses.
- The academy's specialist subjects are technology and the performing arts.
- An interim Principal took up post in February 2013.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious allegations of a child protection nature were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the incident were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that no teaching is inadequate and that more is good or better by:
  - making sure that the work set for students is always sufficiently challenging and pitched at the right level so that all students, including those who have special educational needs, achieve their potential
  - improving the quality of teachers' marking so that it consistently gives students clear guidance about how well they are doing and how they can improve
  - ensuring that all teachers ask probing questions to develop and extend students' knowledge and skills.
- Raise attainment and accelerate rates of progress for all groups of students, especially in mathematics, by:

- reducing the gaps in attainment and progress between different groups of students so they all achieve well
  - developing more effective ways of intervening in the learning of younger students so they gain the basic skills and knowledge to allow them to succeed from Year 9 onwards.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
- strengthening the school’s capacity to bring about change rapidly by making sure that leaders challenge underperformance and ensure that teaching is good or better
  - refining and embedding recently introduced systems to monitor students’ progress, set targets and tackle underachievement in the school
  - ensuring that the behaviour management systems are used effectively by all staff in order to improve standards of behaviour throughout the academy
  - ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of all students.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Most students start Year 7 with standards that are significantly below the national average. By the end of Year 11, students' attainment is low and indicates that achievement is inadequate. The proportion of students gaining five GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, over the past two years has been significantly below the national average
- Students eligible for support through the pupil premium attain below-average standards and often make slower progress than others in the school. On average, these students achieved one GCSE grade lower in English and mathematics than other students in the academy. Students who have special educational needs do not make enough progress because work is not always set at the right level for them. However, students who have a statement of special educational needs make better progress.
- Too many students in Key Stage 3 fail to make sufficient progress in English and mathematics. Too many do not possess the mathematical skills they require for them to succeed in the next stage of education, training or employment. Students' literacy skills have not been developed in different subjects, as initiatives taken to promote literacy outside of English lessons are still in the early stages of development and have yet to be applied effectively.
- Although plans are in place to improve the curriculum and teaching, achievement in modern foreign languages and humanities is inadequate.
- Some students who were previously entered early for GCSE did not always achieve the success of which they were capable. The academy is moving away from entering students early for GCSE examinations.
- Students in Years 10 and 11 who study vocational courses one day a week at Lincoln College achieve well on this course, but missing their academic lessons for that day adversely affects their progress in other subjects. There are plans to reduce the use of off-site provision.
- Students' progress is beginning to speed up because the academy is addressing the reasons behind the underachievement. The staff are making better use of data to check on students' progress and to set individual targets. However, there has not been sufficient time for the impact of these initiatives and recent improvements in teaching to be seen in examination results.
- Many students in Year 7 are supported in their learning and progress through the use of catch-up lessons. These lessons are having a positive impact on students' progress and their development of communication skills.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The teaching has been inadequate in the past, but is improving as a result of action taken by school leaders, who carry out frequent checks on the quality of teaching and learning. High-quality training by teaching coaches is helping teachers to develop their skills. There is an increasing amount of good teaching, although a small amount of inadequate teaching remains.
- The teaching, particularly in mathematics, humanities and modern foreign languages, has not

been strong enough to make sure that students achieve as well as they should. It is better in vocational subjects because work in these subjects is more often pitched at the right level. In some subjects, students are not always helped to understand what they need to do to improve.

- Teachers' questioning skills are not always as effective as they should be in all classes. Teachers tend to pick those students who volunteer to provide answers which means that the rest do not have to think about giving a response.
- Where the teaching is good, teachers have high expectations of what the students can achieve and demonstrate good subject knowledge. Students are provided with opportunities to work in pairs or small groups on challenging and well-structured activities which develop their self-confidence and improve their speaking and listening skills. Lessons have a clear purpose and proceed at an appropriately brisk pace.
- The academy has plans to introduce arrangements for literacy to be taught across all subjects in order to help the students develop these important skills at a faster rate. In the past, students' literacy skills have not been supported well enough.
- Teachers' marking is not always good enough. The best marking links to what students are expected to learn and provides them with clear guidance on how to improve their work. However, too often, teachers' marking does not show students clearly what they need to do to improve their work.
- Too often, teachers do not make sure that students who have special educational needs learn what is intended. Work is not always set at the right level, with the result that students do not concentrate well on their work.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well throughout the academy. Students develop an awareness of different cultures and religions, helped by the school's international links. The 'Learning for Life' programme promotes good social and moral development and celebrates students' success. In a lesson in Year 10, students discussed discrimination in a balanced and confident way.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Significant improvements have been made in recent months to the way students' behaviour is managed. Poor behaviour is checked quickly and good behaviour is rewarded and celebrated. Students usually move around the building calmly and sensibly. Students mix well with each other at break and lunchtimes. There is, however, still some poor behaviour and students say that not all staff use the behaviour policy consistently.
- In a few lessons, students' lack of interest and low-level disruption result in them not making sufficient progress. Students are not always given sufficient opportunities to take on added responsibilities to strengthen their self-confidence and develop independent approaches to their learning.
- Attendance is below the national average. As a result of efforts to help both students and their parents understand the importance of coming to school, attendance is improving although persistent absence still is too high.
- Students feel safe and well supported. They know how to stay safe using the internet and

understand the different forms of bullying. Bullying does not happen very often but, when it does, it is always dealt with quickly and effectively by the staff.

## **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Past inadequacies in the leadership and management of the school are quickly being rectified, although new initiatives have still to be embedded and have not yet had a sustained impact on improving students' achievement. Leaders, including the governing body, understand the weaknesses that need to be addressed, and are taking appropriate action to bring about further improvement.
- The interim Principal has a clear vision for the academy. She has introduced strategies that have begun to improve the quality of teaching. Jobs and responsibilities have been clarified and better use is made of the expertise which exists within the leadership team. The school improvement plans address the right issues. New systems to improve the quality of teaching and learning have been introduced alongside new approaches to using data to track students' progress and identify underachievement.
- The interim Principal and the senior leadership team are helping staff who are not performing well enough, both in the classroom and in their management responsibilities, to improve their practice. Subject leaders and staff with other management responsibilities have become more accountable for students' progress and are implementing change more rapidly. The more consistent approach taken by leaders and staff is beginning to have an impact on students' attitudes to learning. There is clear evidence that leaders have the capacity for securing further improvements.
- Account is now taken of teachers' performance when decisions are made about salary increases. The programme of professional development and extra coaching by consultants are having a positive impact on improving teachers' skills.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs of all students. Lessons are too long and do not promote high levels of achievement. The school recognises its shortcomings and has plans to change the curriculum from September 2013. It is moving towards offering more GCSE courses and offering students more challenge.
- Safeguarding policies, practice and child protection arrangements meet statutory requirements and ensure that students are safe while in school.
- The academy sponsors are providing strong support for the academy. The sponsor's consultants are actively involved in helping teachers to improve the quality of teaching. They have also provided support for the leadership team to develop new systems and processes to monitor and evaluate the quality of education provided by the academy.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the academy. It holds regular meetings with leaders at all levels and holds them accountable for the quality of teaching. It is committed to improving the outcomes for all students. It knows how the school's performance data compare with schools nationally and challenges the interim Principal about students' progress and achievement. The Chair of the Governing Body has established strategies to secure good training for governors and sets appropriately challenging targets for senior leaders.

- The governing body has helped the school with its approaches to improve attendance. It has approved and monitors the use of pupil premium funding to support students' progress.
- The governing body knows the challenges ahead and the areas for development. Governors maintain a good awareness of the quality of teaching across the academy and ensure that good teachers are rewarded and that those who do not meet targets are held to account.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135666
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406621

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	965
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	E-ACT
<b>Chair</b>	Stephen Hopkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fiona Wainde (interim Principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01427 612411
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