

Penwortham Priory Academy

Crow Hills Road, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 0JE

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Despite a dip in attainment in 2012, students overall attain standards above the national average.
- The rate of students' progress has increased as a result of improved teaching, especially in mathematics. Students who fall behind are being supported with increasing effectiveness so they catch up on ground lost.
- Leaders and governors took immediate and decisive action to improve the low results in mathematics and science in 2012. Early results confirm the significant improvement in mathematics in 2013.
- Leaders and managers have taken steps to steadily improve the performance of groups of students who achieve at a lower level than the majority of students in the academy.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around school is considerate and respectful. They work well together in the classroom and discuss together what they have learned so they are able to deepen their understanding. Students feel safe and are cared for well.
- Governors have supported academy leaders well in moving to academy status and are now set to evaluate the effectiveness of their newer role to identify how they can continue to provide effective support and challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress and standards in science have not increased enough to enable all students to reach higher standards.
- Some teaching is not consistently good.
- A small number of subject leaders are not checking thoroughly that teaching and standards in their subjects are high enough to help all students make good and better progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 teachers and 37 parts of lessons, four of which were observed jointly by inspectors and senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, a range of senior and other leaders, with the Chair of the Governing Body, with students from each year group and a telephone discussion took place with school's external adviser. Two Year 10 students were visited at their work experience placement and discussed the progress they were making at the placement and in the academy.
- The team looked at a range of documents written by the academy including the school's evaluation of the quality of its provision, plans for future improvement, records of meetings, information on students' attainment and progress, records relating to behaviour, attendance and the curriculum and policies relating to the safeguarding of students.
- Inspectors took account of 32 parents' views expressed in the online questionnaire (Parent View)

Inspection team

Nell Banfield, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Barbara Dutton	Additional Inspector
Derek Davies	Additional Inspector
Janet Peckett	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Penwortham Priory Academy converted to become an academy in November 2012. When its predecessor school, Priory Sports and Technology College, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The academy is a smaller than average-sized academy and has a higher than average proportion of boys compared to girls.
- The proportion of students who are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language is slightly lower than that found nationally. The proportion of students who are of Asian, Indian and Pakistani heritage is higher than that found nationally.
- The proportion of students known to be supported by pupil premium funding, which is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, students looked after by adults other than their own parents and children from service families, increased in 2012 and is now only slightly below that found nationally.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is lower than the proportion found nationally. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is close to the national average.
- The academy makes arrangements for a number of students in Key Stage 4 to receive some of their education away from the school site at Myerscough College, Preston College, Runshaw College, Morecambe College, Leicester College, and Ashton College; a small number follow apprentice courses at National Tyres and Rosewood Joinery and vocational courses at BMW Blackburn and AA Trailers.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy is the Satellite School for the Pennine Lancashire Leadership Academy and is recognised as an iPad Academy School. It has received a number of awards including Investing in Community Engagement Award, the Design Award in Technology and is one of five schools selected for the EU project on Creative Classrooms.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching so students' progress is increased further by:
 - ensuring teachers check the progress of students in lessons so all students can deepen their understanding and improve their progress further, especially in mathematics and science for the higher-ability students
 - developing teachers' skills in responding to feedback from students about their learning, so teaching can be adjusted more closely to the speed at which students are learning to support rapid progress.
- Improve the self-evaluation skills of some subject leaders so they are clear about the actions needed to improve standards and progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students' attainment improved significantly to above national averages in 2011. This represents good achievement from students' average starting points. Students currently in Year 11 have already reached national standards in mathematics and are set to reach above average standards in mathematics and English in 2013. The academy's data indicate students are to reach standards in science that are closer to the national average than in 2012.
- All students make good progress in literacy as a result of regular reading opportunities and the access students have to additional reading material on their individual computer tablets. Younger students who need individual support to improve their reading are supported by skilled and regular additional teaching, so they make good progress in literacy and gain additional skills that help them in lessons. Students use their computer tablets to photograph notes on the whiteboard and on worksheets so they can read the material in small sections. This helps them to read more fluently so they can build their understanding.
- A proportion of students take mathematics examinations early and then has time to improve their attainment further to reach even higher standards.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make progress in line with other groups of students in the academy. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Students from an Indian background made especially good progress in 2012.
- The academy's support to improve the progress and attainment of boys and of those students supported by pupil premium funding has helped them to reduce, but not yet close, the gap between their attainment and the attainment of other groups of students in the academy. Their progress has improved steadily over the last three years.
- Current students who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, achieved grades two thirds of a grade lower than other students in the academy in 2012. The academy's figures indicate the gap is set to reduce further in 2013. The academy's continued efforts to reduce gaps in attainment and progress between groups of students demonstrates their commitment to all students having an equal opportunity to succeed.
- The spending of pupil premium funding is carefully recorded and is used increasingly effectively to provide additional teaching and support for students so they understand what they need to learn and how they can improve their skills and understanding. It also provides additional support for a small group of younger students so they can make steady progress.
- The students who follow courses away from the school site make good progress. The school selects the provision students attend very carefully so it meets their personal talents and interests as well as providing them with courses where they can succeed. Their progress and attendance are monitored closely to ensure they can benefit from the courses provided.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching in the majority of lessons is good and a proportion of teaching is outstanding. Teaching in the majority of subjects has improved over time.
- Relationships between students and adults are very good and staff know the students well. Students talked appreciatively of the help they receive when they are stuck with their work and of how teachers give up their time to help them.
- Teachers in most lessons challenge students to think of answers for themselves or discuss their ideas with another student. In a Year 9 mathematics lesson where students were struggling to understand a task fully, the teacher asked each of the six students who had been successful to sit with a group who were stuck and to discuss the processes together. This meant students could be supported by straightforward explanations and those students explaining could strengthen their learning. The teacher then checked all had understood.

- In most subjects, students are helped to understand how well they are doing by teachers' marking and feedback. Helpful comments in their books mean they know what they need to improve to get to the next level. Spellings and explanations are given in some marking to make sure students can spell and understand key subject terms.
- Teachers give additional help to students who learn more slowly and are becoming increasingly skilled in splitting tasks into smaller steps so that students who are unsure are able to succeed and develop more secure understanding. However, in some lessons, because some teachers are not clear enough about how much progress the more-able students have made, they are not always given work which will help them to progress further, and learn too slowly as a result.
- Leaders and teachers are more successful in checking the academy's progress data of those groups who have made slower progress in the past. As a result, boys and those students supported by pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding are making better progress. Funding is used to provide additional teaching and time to talk to an adult who can help them persevere with their efforts until they succeed. Students, particularly boys, respond well to opportunities to use their computer tablets in lessons and develop independence in their class work as a result.
- In a number of lessons, teachers use questioning or tasks to check students' learning before moving on to the next stage of the lesson. However, teachers do not always take enough notice of students' responses and adjust the lesson accordingly. As a result the lesson moves on too quickly or students complete work they already understood. In a design technology lesson, time was taken to check students' learning about soldering with carefully adjusted questions to match the range of ability so students had a clear understanding of the techniques and could solder with increasing finesse and skill.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students in the academy help staff to maintain a harmonious and calm environment so all feel safe and well cared for. Students behave well in lessons and expect to be treated, and treat others, with respect.
- Students talk about the helpful knowledge the academy gives them and their parents about how to avoid risks when using social networks and mobile phones. They develop secure relationships with their peers and work exceptionally well in lessons by reflecting on and discussing their learning with their peers in lessons. This develops their social and moral understanding well.
- Students say they feel safe in and around the academy and feel confident that any adult will help them if they are upset or worried. They know about the different forms bullying can take, are confident that bullying is rare and that if it happens it is dealt with swiftly.
- Students enjoy the end of the day sports and drama sessions and can describe very positive lessons and Form Time sessions where they discuss current complex moral dilemmas such as the current proposal to charge people arriving in the UK from other countries for medical care. This helps them to understand different religions and points of view. They take part in and organise events such as a 'Breakfast for Dads' on Fathers' Day, raised funds for students to visit schools in Belgium and in the Ukraine, baked goods to contribute to the celebration of the anniversary of a neighbouring hospice and raised funds for the Red Cross. These activities support their cultural and spiritual understanding effectively.
- The vast majority of students attend well and are punctual to lessons. The academy has progressively improved the attendance of boys and of students supported by pupil premium funding so they make better progress. The number of students excluded from the academy has reduced over time.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have been successful in improving teaching in most subjects over time, and particularly in mathematics.
- The academy and its senior leaders have improved standards in mathematics rapidly following the decline in results in 2012 by improving teaching. They have also successfully established regular assessment and evaluation of students' progress by subject leaders and teachers so they identify those students who fall behind. The range of intervention and support offered to students who are not reaching their targets has been extended and improved so teachers do not just repeat the same teaching again but clear up misunderstandings and misconceptions. This provides good evidence of the capacity of leaders to sustain improvement.
- The evaluation of the quality of teaching and students' progress and attainment is not yet consistently good across all subjects. A small number of subject leaders are not critical enough in their evaluations and accept general and broad indications that teaching is good too readily. A very small number lack ambition and occasionally believe that a few students are not able to improve their progress. Leaders and governors have appointed new leaders in some subjects and the academy's assessments indicate that student progress is improving.
- All senior and subject leaders and governors have ensured that teachers are clear about the Teacher Standards, and clear that their targets relate to how effectively their teaching supports students' progress and attainment and how this leads to promotion and recognition through additional awards.
- The academy provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of students well. Students who become disengaged follow courses which concentrate on English, mathematics and science, vocational and college and work placements. This meets their individual needs and talents well. Improvements have been made in the selection of students for science courses so all have a chance to achieve high standards. Those students who follow courses away from the school site make good progress and achieve well.
- The school's external partner has recently worked less frequently with the academy but has provided effective support and challenge to improve standards successfully.
- Parents strongly support the academy and the vast majority would recommend the school to others. They agree their child is safe and well cared for.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding students are clear and meet statutory requirements. The academy takes effective steps to ensure the safety of students who attend courses away from the school site.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has successfully worked with the academy conversion process and is now looking to re-evaluate its effectiveness in this newer role. Governors have learned more about how to measure students' progress and attainment and how to compare the academy's performance with other schools and academies. They know what the academy has done to improve teaching, know what still needs to be done and have supported leaders and managers in formulating the plans to do this. They have also supported the academy's leaders in appointing new leaders. They are absolutely clear about how the additional pupil premium and catch-up funding has been spent and are anticipating evidence of an increase in students' progress and attainment once the 2013 examination results are published.

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	138948
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	412825

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	693
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheena Ewing
Headteacher	James Hourigan
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2010
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