

Manor Croft Academy

Old Bank Road, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF12 7DW

Inspection dates 7–8 July 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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students make expected, rather than more than expected progress, including in English and mathematics. While this is an improvement on the slower progress made last year, students do not achieve well overall.
- The quality of teaching is too variable throughout the school to promote students' good progress.
- Teaching does not challenge students sufficiently accurately, particularly the most able, to ensure that they achieve at least well. Lessons do not always interest them and promote their positive attitudes to learning. As a result, behaviour is not yet good.
- Marking does not always help students to improve their work and teachers do not always check that students respond to any advice given.
- Teaching and achievement in mathematics are improving more slowly than in English because of the significant issues in recruiting good teachers of mathematics. Thus the quality of teaching is more variable and students from Year 9 onwards have too many gaps in their learning from previous years.
- Students do not get enough chance to practise and strengthen their numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics or to apply the concepts they have learnt to solve problems.
- The school does not have high enough expectations of students' attendance to ensure that they can achieve their potential.
- Less established senior leaders and some subject leaders, while working purposefully and with great commitment, do not have the training and skills to be fully effective in driving improvements in their areas and to support the work of the more established senior leaders.

The school has the following strengths

- The Principal, ably supported by the Vice Principal and governors, provides very strong and focused leadership, which is leading to improvements in all aspects of the school's work.
- The trust offers significant and very helpful support to the school. It challenges strongly the impact it is having on improving teaching and achievement.
- Students feel safe in school and well cared for by the staff.
- Students like the improvements that are being made and the higher expectations that the school has of their learning, progress and behaviour.
- Teaching assistants support those students who need additional help with their learning effectively.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in a wide range of lessons, of which five were observed jointly with individual members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors talked with students during lessons and at break and lunchtimes. They met formally with four groups of students to ascertain their views about the quality of education they receive at the school.
- The inspectors also held meetings with senior and subject leaders and members of the trust.
- The inspectors looked at a variety of documentation, including information about the achievement of all groups of students in the school. They checked the school’s improvement plan and its impact on driving improvement. They scrutinised students’ work, checked records of their behaviour and attendance and scrutinised policies to help keep them safe.
- In carrying out the inspection, the inspectors took into account the 33 responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View), letters from parents and the 32 responses given in the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Tudor Griffiths	Additional Inspector
Marcia Harding	Additional Inspector
Irene Lavelle	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school, which serves the community of Earlsheaton in Dewsbury, is much smaller than others of its type. It is growing quickly.
- Manor Croft Academy converted to become an academy in September 2013. When its predecessor school, Earlsheaton Technology College was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2012, it was judged inadequate and was placed in special measures.
- The school is part of the School Partnership Trust Academies which is a single-trust multi-academy sponsor and an educational charity.
- Most students are of White British heritage. A just above average proportion speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is average.
- A small number of students in Key Stages 3 and 4 who have behavioural and emotional issues attend Elland Academy.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- There have been significant changes in the staffing of the school since it became an academy, with only half of the staff remaining in post.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good, in order to accelerate the rate of students' progress, by ensuring that:
 - students of all abilities and particularly the most able, are set appropriately challenging work
 - teachers' marking informs students how to make further progress and teachers check that students respond to it
 - teaching interests and engages students, promotes their positive attitudes to learning and is backed up by consistently applied classroom routines.
- Raise standards in mathematics throughout the school by ensuring that:
 - teachers have the knowledge and skills to teach mathematics effectively
 - students have regular opportunities to apply the mathematical concepts that they have learnt through problem-solving tasks
 - students practise their numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics
 - students' gaps in learning from Year 9 onwards are addressed as a matter of urgency.
- Ensure students' continued safety and well-being by having higher expectations of their attendance and impressing upon them the link between attendance and progress.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership in driving improvements in teaching and achievement by ensuring that recently promoted senior leaders, and also subject leaders have the training and skills to identify and address effectively the issues in their areas.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable through the school to accelerate the rate of students' progress as it needs to. Some senior leaders and subject leaders, including those who are new to their posts, do not have the training and skills to drive improvements in teaching and achievement quickly enough.
- The Principal knows exactly what needs doing. She has evaluated very accurately the school's performance and is addressing head on the issues that are barriers to improvements. This includes mathematics, which is the major priority for the school. Consequently, very good systems are in place to check every aspect of the school's work and to help it improve.
- Senior leadership has been restructured so that all senior leaders have roles and responsibilities that cover every area and match where the school needs to improve. They also have accountability for their impact on the areas that they oversee. The Vice Principal uses data very well to check on students' progress and senior leaders meet with the staff they line manage at least once a fortnight. This is proving effective in driving improvements in teaching and progress more quickly. However, the school has to rely on a great deal of intervention in Key Stage 4 to help students to fill in the gaps in their learning. These are due to the variable quality of teaching in the past and to a smaller extent, now.
- There has been much to do to improve the school, and this is very much work in progress. A significant gain is the progress the school is making in changing the culture of the school and the aspirations of its students. All students who the inspectors spoke to told of how aspects of the school have improved, including teaching and behaviour, and how this is helping them to be ambitious for their future and to expect more of themselves.
- Many staff are also positive about the changes in the school, knowing that they are necessary for the school to become more effective in helping students to achieve their potential. They recognise where further improvements need to be made, such as in some students' attitudes to learning.
- There have been many changes in staffing since the Principal's arrival. She has not been afraid of taking difficult decisions for long-term gain. The school's membership of the trust has benefited it significantly, including in the expertise of staff from other schools in the trust, which is readily available and which has gone some way to manage the difficulties in recruiting teachers and leaders in mathematics and to strengthen teaching.
- As a result of the school's work, progress, particularly at Key Stage 3, teaching, behaviour and attendance have improved for all groups, but inconsistencies which remain in the rate of progress are being addressed.
- Teaching is not consistently good and lesson observations have identified where individual teachers must strengthen their practices. However, the leadership of teaching by an experienced senior leader is good because effective strategies, such as coaching and support are helping the staff to develop and refine their skills. Another benefit of being part of the trust is the facility for staff at Manor Croft to use the expertise from other schools to develop good teaching and leadership.
- The leader responsible for overseeing the spending of pupil premium funding has ensured that this aspect has become a major and more effective focus. Although there is still some patchiness, disadvantaged students are achieving better than last year, including in Year 11.
- The special needs coordinator leads her area well. She knows how well students are progressing through her learning walks and her monitoring of the quality of support provided by teaching assistants ensures that students get the specific help that they need.
- Attendance is improving and exclusions falling because of the structured, tenacious approach of the leaders who have responsibility for these areas. Similarly, the behaviour, attendance and progress of those students who have alternative provision are monitored carefully.
- While there are strengths in senior and subject leadership, overall it requires improvement because several leaders do not have the training, skills or experience to understand fully what is needed in their roles to drive improvements as quickly as possible.
- The school has prepared appropriately for the new curriculum and is in the process of organising it to ensure the best coverage of academic learning and students' readiness for life after school. There is a more diverse range of courses in Key Stage 4 than previously which match students' abilities and aspirations well. For example, students who are disabled and who have special educational needs have courses to suit their specific abilities. The school ensures that students develop skills and knowledge for life, through careers information and guidance and through teaching about safety and lifestyle choices.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted well. It includes British values, which are modelled every day and also promoted through assemblies and lessons. Students understand

the importance of democracy in a fair society, through, for example, the recent school general election. Through these aspects, the school is focusing on fostering good, positive relations.

- The many after-school activities and visits broaden students' skills, interests and horizons, such as visits to universities.
- The school checks safeguarding procedures robustly and has thorough checks in place to keep students safe, including those who learn off site.
- Students like the school, which they see as fair. Staff do not tolerate any form of discrimination. However, not all students yet have an equal chance of success in school because teaching is not consistently good.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are exceptionally knowledgeable and well informed about the school because they are so involved in monitoring and evaluating all of its work.
 - No stone is unturned in their efforts to improve the school and to make it self-sufficient.
 - Thus, they have a very accurate understanding of how it needs to improve and are proving effective in helping this to be achieved. They know, for example, that teaching needs to improve and where the weaknesses are and check that leaders are addressing this.
 - Minutes of governing body meetings show comprehensive and detailed probing into all aspects of the school's work, aided by their accurate understanding of data. They demonstrate the trust's commitment to the school and its challenge and support for it, as well as very high expectations of its work.
 - The governors have an accurate picture of the improvements in the achievement of disadvantaged students due to a comprehensive review of the school's provision and its impact. They check very regularly that further improvements are being made.
 - They understand the value of staff targets in improving teaching and ensure that staff who meet their targets are rewarded financially. They check that teachers who miss their goals get the support they need to achieve them.
 - The governors undergo very regular and specific training, including in safeguarding, which is the basis of the school's work. Training for staff is designed to build up their skills in a wide range of areas, in order for the school to become more self-sufficient.
 - The school's finances are sound. Money is spent carefully and checks made of its impact on students' achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Not all students have good attitudes to learning. If they do not find learning interesting, do not have enough work to do or their work is too hard, some students become inattentive, chatter and distract others from their work.
- By contrast, students are industrious and learn well when teaching is good and work matches their abilities.
- Students and staff say that behaviour in lessons has improved a lot in the last two years, because students know what is expected of them and more staff use the behaviour policy promptly and to good effect. Fixed-term exclusions have more than halved for the same reason.
- The behaviour of students who learn off site has improved because they like the work that they are given.
- Around the school, many students are sensible and orderly. Corridors are quite noisy areas at the end of lunchtime and not all students move around the school in an orderly way. However, the level of supervision is good.
- Many students show maturity as they take on responsibilities, such as being student leaders.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Students feel safe in school because of the security of the site and the help and support they get from the staff. The students said that there is very little bullying, because students get on well and the staff do not allow it to happen. All of them fill in a bullying log weekly, so that the school has an up-to-date picture of how safe students are feeling and how staff need to help. The school council organised an anti-bullying week recently to reinforce the message.
- Students of all ages have a good understanding of different types of bullying, particularly cyber-bullying.

They also have a good awareness for their age of prejudices which lead to bullying, such as homophobia. They know about the danger of grooming, extremist views and child sexual exploitation, all of which ensure they are well informed as they go out into life after school.

- Attendance is improving and getting closer to the national average, because of much improved and thorough systems established by the heads of year for checking on it.
- The proportion of students who are persistently absent has fallen because of similarly good procedures.
- Students who learn off site stay safe because staff visit them every half term to check on their welfare and progress and their attendance, which has improved, is checked on daily by the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is variable throughout the school. It requires improvement because not enough students make good progress, including in literacy and in mathematics. Students' attitudes to learning also vary, according to how much teaching interests them and the expectations teachers have about their attitudes to learning.
- A common weakness is in the challenge offered to students, particularly the most able students. Not enough is expected of them. They are often offered a greater amount of work or slightly harder work than students of other abilities. However, they are not regularly challenged enough to help them reach their potential. This includes developing the ability to transfer the skills and knowledge that they have to unfamiliar situations or problems, or to evaluate critically in detail what they have learnt.
- Marking is also variable in telling students exactly what they need to do and in checking that students carry out corrections from the previous work. However, in some marking, for example in a mathematics lesson, the advice given is specific and very helpful.
- There is a particular inconsistency in the quality of teaching in mathematics which has been aggravated by difficulties in recruiting staff with the necessary subject knowledge and skills. Although it is improving, students do not have enough chances to apply the mathematical concepts they have learnt through solving problems. Neither are there regularly planned opportunities for students to practise their mathematical skills in subjects other than mathematics.
- There is some good teaching which results in students' good progress and positive attitudes to learning, for example, in science. Also, in English, Year 10 students made good progress in determining the characteristics of a key character in a text. They understood that they needed to focus on how language was used to put across messages and were able to evaluate individual characters and the power of language in conveying this.
- The teaching of reading is good. All students in Year 7 read regularly. There is a specific focus for many students on comprehension skills, in weekly literacy sessions, and weaker readers practise more basic skills, by using the sounds made by letters to pronounce words accurately.
- Students have regular chances to strengthen their literacy skills in lessons other than English, such as in history and religious education lessons where inspectors saw good examples of extended writing.
- Teaching assistants are mostly effective in supporting unobtrusively those students who need additional help in understanding teaching, so that they make secure progress.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students do not consistently learn well. Achievement in mathematics is taking longer to improve than in other areas because of greater variability in teaching over time than in other subjects.
- Standards were well below average in 2014, with the proportion of students achieving five A* to C grades, including in English and mathematics, at the end of Year 11 and in a range of other subjects, such as history and art and design, being below average. A much lower proportion of students than found nationally made expected progress in English and mathematics because teaching had been too variable.
- This year, the school's interventions and improved teaching, have enabled the school to be confident that students are on track to at least reach the minimum standards expected by the government. The proportion making expected progress in English and mathematics is predicted to improve to close to average in English. Standards in mathematics are improving, but more slowly because of the gaps in students' learning. There is a reasonable increase in the proportion of students set to make good progress in English, but the proportion making good progress in mathematics remains well below national standards.
- The school's data, backed up by students' work over time, points to Year 10 students making accelerated

progress from their average starting points on joining the school. An above average proportion is expected to make expected progress in English. As in Year 11, mathematics forecasts remain lower but the school is working to improve this.

- Overall, students make better progress in English than in mathematics, although the rate of progress is improving in Key Stage 3.
- Disadvantaged students made slower rates of progress in 2014 by the end of Year 11 than those who were not disadvantaged. They performed a grade behind other students in English and were one and two thirds behind them in mathematics by the end of Year 11. Nationally the gap in standards was between one and a third grades in English and two grades in mathematics compared to nationally.
- The school has ensured that support matches the different needs of disadvantaged students much more closely, for example by providing them with help to sound out letters and words accurately. This year, rates of progress of disadvantaged students in Year 11, particularly in English, are set to improve. The standards of those students who are not disadvantaged have also improved. Gaps in attainment still remain.
- In Year 11, there are too few disabled students and those with special educational needs for their results to be statistically meaningful. In Years 7 and 8, they are making similar progress to other groups of students in English and mathematics. It is not the case in Years 9 and 10, where gaps in learning mean that they are playing 'catch-up.'
- A greater proportion of the most able students in Year 11 than last year are on track to reach higher levels, according to the school's data. This is due more to helpful interventions than suitably challenging teaching. However, there is now more emphasis on the learning of the most able students and their progress is accelerating through the school.
- Lesson observations; work in books and the school's data show good progress of all groups of students in Key Stage 3 in English and mathematics, because teachers have higher expectations of what students can achieve. This includes students who speak English as an additional language who make at least progress in line with other groups of students.
- Students are entered for public examinations only once, at the end of the course, to ensure that they have all of the skills that they need.
- The opportunities for students to read regularly are helping them to improve their literacy skills and understanding, with students in Key Stage 4 showing stronger development of their critical skills when reading a text or discussing a character.
- Those students who have not reached the expected standards in English and mathematics by the end of primary school receive a range of support from the school's catch-up funding to help them get where they need to be. Last year, the large majority reached the expected standard in English by the end of Year 7 and the majority achieved it in mathematics.
- At the end of Year 11, most students go on to join the sixth form in other schools, further education, or go into training.

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	139076
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	450013

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	630
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mervyn McCrory
Headteacher	Hayley Clacy
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01924 325230
Fax number	01924 325232
Email address	info@manorcroft.org.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

