

# Penwortham Priory Academy

Crow Hills Road, Penwortham, Preston, Lancashire PR1 0JE

## Inspection dates

17–18 November 2015

## Overall effectiveness

**Requires improvement**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an academy that requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not been consistently good, particularly in science, history and geography. This is why the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, dipped in 2015.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils, although improving, is still not good enough.
- Procedures to hold teachers to account for their performance have lacked rigour. As a result, weak teaching has not been tackled swiftly enough.
- Subject leadership is of variable quality. Subject leaders do not always hold teachers to account for pupils' achievement sufficiently effectively.
- In general, boys' achievement, although improving in some subjects, does not always keep pace with that of the girls.
- Governors have not held school leaders to account sufficiently robustly, particularly regarding the underachievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors in the past have shown some reluctance to use all the powers at their disposal to eradicate weak teaching or poor leadership of subjects.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is improving but it is still not as good as that of other pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low and therefore some lessons are insufficiently challenging.
- Teachers do not always use homework effectively to extend pupils' knowledge.

### The academy has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well and are excellent ambassadors for the academy. They speak very highly of the wide variety of extra-curricular activities on offer that broaden their horizons and enrich their lives.
- Most pupils make good progress in English because this subject is well taught and well led.
- The headteacher and his capable leadership team are ambitious for the academy and have provided a strong impetus for change. Pupils and staff are unanimous that the many initiatives that have been set in motion by academy leaders are already helping the academy to get back on track.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching, so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and boys, make at least good progress, by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement and standards of presentation
  - ensuring pupils follow teachers' advice on how to improve their work
  - making sure homework is used effectively to extend pupils' learning
  - helping pupils to improve their writing skills by correcting spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes more rigorously
  - ensuring teachers adapt their teaching to suit the needs and abilities of their pupils more effectively so that all pupils are challenged appropriately.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring leaders at all levels, including governance, use performance management and the new procedures to monitor the quality of teaching effectively, in order to eradicate weak teaching and poor subject leadership
  - embedding new procedures to track pupils' progress so that pupils' outcomes improve rapidly across all subjects and year groups
  - making sure all subject leaders hold the staff in their departments to account more effectively for pupils' achievement
  - ensuring additional funds available through the pupil premium are spent effectively so that existing gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others in the academy in both their achievement and behaviour are eradicated.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to see how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The relatively new senior leadership team has provided a strong impetus for change. Academy leaders have correctly identified areas of weakness and have started to take remedial action to improve the academy; nevertheless, as many initiatives are at the early stages of development, they have not had time to become embedded and therefore have not yet had the desired impact.
- The headteacher and his capable leadership team are ambitious for the academy. This vision has been shared effectively: the large majority of staff that we met during the inspection and those who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire spoke positively of the changes that have been made and the growing culture of accountability that is being fostered.
- Subject leadership is of variable quality. Strong leadership of English has blazed a trail in improving outcomes, including those for disadvantaged pupils, and new leadership in mathematics is beginning to have some impact on improving teaching in this subject. However, other subject leaders, for example in history and geography, have been less effective, leading to pupils underachieving in these subjects.
- Procedures for performance management have been revised, as in the past they were ineffective. Senior leaders were not in a position to take formal steps in challenging underperforming teachers, relying on staff drawing their own conclusions from 'uncomfortable conversations' and then leaving their positions voluntarily. The new proposals are rigorous and have the potential to support senior leaders much more effectively in tackling underperformance.
- Self-evaluation has been overgenerous, particularly regarding the quality of teaching. This is because, in the past, academy leaders relied on isolated evidence from lesson observations to arrive at their judgement. Academy leaders now take into account a much wider range of evidence, including listening to what pupils say about their lessons and information about the progress they are making. As a result, academy leaders are starting to develop a much more accurate view of the overall quality of teaching.
- The academy development plan is aspirational and soundly based on the correct priorities. However, it has lacked precision, clear lines of accountability, measurable success criteria and timescales. As a result, it has not been helpful up to now in driving improvement. Senior leaders recognise the weaknesses of this plan and therefore are currently in the process of revising this document.
- Systems to track pupils' progress have, up until very recently, been unhelpful to academy leaders in spotting underperformance, particularly in teaching and pupils' progress. The system currently in place is far more fit for purpose, but it is at the early stages of implementation and therefore has not had time to have a positive impact on driving improvement.
- In the past, senior leaders have not checked up on the impact of how the pupil premium was spent with sufficient rigour and, as a result, disadvantaged pupils underachieved. There has certainly been some improvement in outcomes for these pupils, particularly in English and to some extent in mathematics. However, there are still gaps in achievement between these pupils and others in the academy and this is one of the principal reasons why this academy requires improvement.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, but in the past a much smaller proportion of pupils than is seen nationally chose to study a suite of rigorous academic subjects, such as languages and humanities. Academy leaders have taken swift steps to ensure that more pupils opt for these subjects. As a result, for most pupils at present in the academy, the curriculum serves as a good preparation for the next stages in their lives, giving them the skills and knowledge they will require for a wide range of careers. Strong links with other institutions, such as Myerscough College, also help to provide some pupils with a rich selection of vocational alternatives if that is the route they wish to follow.
- The academy prepares pupils very well for life in modern Britain through a comprehensive programme that covers themes such as democracy, justice and tolerance of other faiths. Pupils are encouraged to debate and develop informed opinions on current affairs; for example, in conversation with inspectors, pupils were able to express in an articulate and intelligent way their opinions on problems in the world, such as terrorism.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported particularly well through the extremely wide variety of extra-curricular activities on offer. Pupils spoke very enthusiastically to inspectors about the enriching experiences that are available, including dramatic productions, visits to art galleries and trips abroad, sports clubs and the chance to study for extra qualifications, such as astronomy. Academy leaders ensure that funds are available for all pupils to take part, whatever their

circumstances.

- Academy leaders, including governors, have successfully created a harmonious environment where the prevailing ethos is one of mutual respect. Pupils are taught highly effectively to challenge racism and value people's different perspectives on life. However, there remain some aspects of inequality in the academy, for example boys do not always achieve as well as girls in a number of subjects.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors and those who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about their academy; they commented that staff now have higher expectations of their behaviour, for example in compliance with the academy uniform. The academy engages well with parents who echoed the views of their children in speaking highly of the academy.
- Academy leaders have recently enlisted support from a school improvement partner which has helped them to develop a more realistic grasp of strengths and weaknesses. The academy enjoys productive links with its 'family' of local schools. These links have already made some impact on improving leadership and teaching in science and have also helped to ensure teachers' assessment information is accurate.
- **The governance of the academy**
  - Governors exercise their statutory duties, particularly regarding finance, with transparency and probity. They have overseen a substantial programme of redevelopment of school facilities that has helped to create a pleasant environment that is conducive to learning.
  - Governors take their responsibilities seriously and engage well with academy leaders and staff. They have a reasonable grasp of where teaching is good and where it is less effective, but their understanding of the information they receive from academy leaders about how well groups of pupils are performing is not always as secure as it might be. As a result, they have not challenged the academy sufficiently regarding the underachievement of disadvantaged pupils.
  - The governing body was disappointed with the GCSE results in 2015 and urged academy leaders to do better. However, in the past, governors have shown some reluctance to use the powers at their disposal, such as performance management, to hold staff more effectively to account.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff and governors are well trained in how to keep pupils safe and consequently pupils are well prepared to assess risks they may encounter in the outside world.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- Over time, teaching in a number of subjects, including science, mathematics, history and geography has not been of consistently good quality, leading to underachievement in these subjects.
- Teaching is good in English and improving solidly in mathematics. There are some tentative signs of improvement in science. There remain pockets of weak teaching in other subjects that are still having a deleterious impact on pupils' progress.
- Teachers do not always use information on pupils' prior learning effectively to plan lessons. As a result, lessons are frequently insufficiently challenging and often teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, whatever their level of ability, are too low.
- Most teachers follow the academy policy and provide useful feedback to pupils on how to improve their work, but they do not always check that pupils have followed this advice. As a consequence, some marking has little impact on helping pupils to make faster progress.
- Teachers' expectations regarding the presentation of pupils' work are too low. Work seen in books during the inspection was often poorly executed, with little attention paid to setting work out neatly and legibly. This did not mirror the generally good attitudes to learning demonstrated by pupils in other aspects of academy life.
- Teachers do not systematically help to develop pupils' writing skills through their marking. Several examples of spelling and grammatical errors in pupils' work were seen that had gone unchecked, leading to repeated mistakes. On the other hand, pupils' speaking and reading skills are developed well overall, both in lessons and during form time.
- Regular and frequent meetings now take place between subject leaders and other leaders in the academy to check up on pupils' progress. This is beginning to help teachers to spot when pupils are falling behind and take timely action to sort this out, for example by providing extra support, often on an individual basis.
- One of the strengths of teaching is teachers' strong subject knowledge. In the best lessons, they use this

well to move learning on. For example, in one physical education lesson observed during the inspection, the teacher used effective questioning to deepen pupils' understanding of a particular movement and then individual pupils modelled this in practice.

- Pupils are now set challenging targets. Pupils spoken to during the inspection welcomed the fact that, should they meet their targets, they are then set even higher ones.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to plan bespoke support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This support has contributed well to these pupils making better progress than in the past because it is well tailored to their individual needs.
- Teachers make good use of other adults in the classroom. Teaching assistants are trained well and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, in one mathematics lesson observed during the inspection, the teaching assistant rephrased questions and used practical examples to help pupils understand an algebraic problem.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, expressed some reservations about the quality of homework. Inspectors' findings endorse this view because homework in some subjects is not set regularly enough or is not of a consistently high standard.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Pupils spoken to during the inspection were fulsome in their praise for the best teachers who they feel 'go the extra mile' to help them to learn.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils say that they feel safe in school and parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, echoed this point of view. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in the world beyond the academy gates through a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education. As a result, pupils can express opinions cogently and sensitively on a wide range of social issues, such as radicalisation and homophobia.
- The academy encourages pupils to adopt healthy habits in their lives and to look after themselves. For example, pupils involved in the film club submitted the winning entry to the 'Lancashire Young Film Makers' competition with their film entitled 'Reflections on five ways to well-being'.
- Academy leaders, including governors, work effectively with pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Regular contact is maintained with a wide range of agencies to help these pupils make the most of life.
- Pupils receive high-quality, objective guidance on the next stages in their lives. They are well informed about the courses available in all local colleges when they leave the academy. Visiting speakers from, and trips to, universities have helped to raise aspiration; for example, one pupil that we met during the inspection spoke very enthusiastically about how his teachers had encouraged him to aim to go to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, one of the most prestigious universities in the world.
- The academy works effectively with most groups of pupils to encourage good attendance, which is now above average. Rates of persistent absenteeism have also dropped. Although the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved, it remains lower than that of other pupils in the academy.
- Academy leaders use rewards effectively to encourage good behaviour. Form groups are made up of pupils across all years. Pupils say that this helps to create a 'family atmosphere' as older pupils can help the younger ones should they encounter difficulties at school.
- Pupils have many opportunities throughout the school day and via extra-curricular activities to develop leadership and work-related learning skills, such as how to get on with people and how to make the most of their lives. Pupils are also encouraged to play an active role in organising assemblies and aspects of citizenship, such as raising money for charity.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The rate of permanent exclusion has dropped substantially since the previous inspection. The rate of fixed-term exclusion remains higher than average; to some extent this is a result of academy leaders having 'raised the bar' in terms of their expectations.
- Pupils are impeccably well presented because they know academy staff expect them to follow the uniform

code 'to the letter'. Inspectors were very impressed with pupils' good manners; many went out of their way to help us, for example by opening doors and directing us to where we needed to go.

- For the most part, pupils arrive punctually to the academy and move in a business-like way on to their next lesson during the day. They come to the academy well prepared with their equipment, ready to learn.
- Pupils show respect for their academy. They are consulted well by academy leaders on changes to the environment; for example, pupils had a say in the design of the new teaching blocks and have also helped the gardener to create beautiful green spaces around the academy that are a pleasure to behold.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection were insistent that bullying of any form is very rare but when it does occur staff step in quickly to sort it out. The vast majority of pupils show a tolerance of others' backgrounds and beliefs, demonstrated by the fact that pupils of different ethnic groups mix harmoniously together, for example in social spaces at break and lunchtime.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good, for the most part, allowing lessons to proceed productively. A little low-level disruption occurs occasionally when the teaching is not engaging.
- Pupils who attend placements away from the academy for part of the week achieve well and demonstrate good standards of both behaviour and attendance.

## Outcomes for pupils

## require improvement

- In 2014, the proportion of pupils who achieved five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, was above the national average. Pupils made good progress in a range of subjects, including English, religious education, information technology, Spanish and physical education. Nevertheless, this headline figure masked some underachievement, particularly of disadvantaged pupils and also some pupils with special educational needs or disabled pupils.
- In 2015, there was a decline in this key measure, largely because pupils underperformed in history, geography and science. Plans for improvement are well under way and inspection evidence points to some indications of impact in science, but this is not the case in humanities, where pupils are still underachieving.
- Across the academy, most pupils make good progress in English, although boys do not achieve quite as well as girls. Judging from lesson observations and scrutiny of work in books, pupils' progress in mathematics is improving. Progress across other subjects is less consistent and also varies across year groups.
- In English, disadvantaged pupils achieve just as well as others in the academy, and nationally, because English is well taught and well led. Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in the academy in mathematics are narrowing, particularly in Key Stage 3. However, these pupils did not achieve as well as other pupils nationally in mathematics when they took their GCSE examinations in 2015.
- According to information provided by the academy, boys are not achieving as well as girls, particularly in Key Stage 4.
- Most-able pupils generally make reasonable progress, although the proportion of pupils gaining the top grades of A\* and A in their GCSE examinations fell in 2015. Changes to the curriculum have enabled a greater number of the most-able pupils to study the sorts of subjects that will prepare them well to apply for prestigious universities in the future; however, sometimes the lack of challenge in lessons is an impediment to them achieving their full potential.
- Academy leaders have spent the Year 7 catch-up funding wisely on learning programmes for English and mathematics and additional teaching time in these subjects. As a result, pupils who started at the academy behind their peers in these subjects are quickly making up lost ground.
- Pupils with special educational needs and disabled pupils currently in the academy are making good progress given their starting points. This is because they receive support of high quality and, as a result, their achievement is improving compared to previous years.
- Pupils who attend work-related training for part of the week make good progress. They can take advantage of excellent training opportunities that prepare them well for the next stages in their lives.

## Academy details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138948
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10005523

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the academy roll</b>	607
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kevin Burke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matthew Eastham
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 320250
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.priory.lancs.sch.uk">www.priory.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:enquiries@priory.lancs.sch.uk">enquiries@priory.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 July 2013

## Information about this academy

- Penwortham Priory Academy is smaller than the average-sized academy. More boys than girls attend the academy.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is greater than the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is about the same as the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or with disabilities is well below the national average.
- The academy meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 attend work-related training at Myerscough College.
- The academy works in collaboration with two local academies, Tarleton Academy and Garstang Academy.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in lessons, visited classrooms at form time and watched how pupils behaved at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the academy, including: information on the progress of pupils currently in the academy; the academy's self-evaluation of its work and plans for further development; records of behaviour, attendance and liaison with external agencies; policies, particularly those relating to safeguarding; minutes of meetings of the governing body and a report from the academy improvement partner. Inspectors also considered information available on the academy's website.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work across a range of subjects and talked to a large number of pupils both formally in meetings and informally around the academy.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, members of the governing body, staff and pupils. Telephone contact was also made with Myerscough College.
- Inspectors took into account the 149 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and also the 52 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors also considered the 196 responses received from pupils to the pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Joan Bonenfant, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dawn Platt	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lisa Crausby	Ofsted Inspector
Marcia Harding	Ofsted Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector

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