

The West Grantham Academy St Hugh's

The Avenue, Dysart Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 7PX

Inspection dates

31 January–1 February 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- School records demonstrate that the actions of the executive headteacher have helped rescue the school from a position of near chaos. Time and energy have been taken to rectify the inadequate behaviours of some pupils in order that the majority are able to learn. These improvements have yet to impact on the outcomes for pupils.
- Too many pupils fail to achieve as they should. This includes disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and the most able.
- The proportion of pupils that are absent or persistently absent from school is too high. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, miss too much of their learning because of poor attendance.
- The proportion of pupils excluded from school, although decreasing, is much higher than national figures and still remains too high.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across and within subject areas. It is improving. Pupils achieve well in some of their science lessons and in English. They are beginning to make better progress in their mathematics lessons. They fail to achieve as well as they should in history.
- The whole-school marking and assessment policy is not followed consistently well. Some pupils do not receive the feedback that they need from their teachers.
- Many middle leaders are new to their roles. They have shown great potential. Their actions are yet to impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the additional funding, including the pupil premium and that for SEN, successfully supports the progress made by the eligible pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the strengths and the weaknesses of the school. They have shown great dedication. They have found many creative approaches that are beginning to improve the school.
- Leaders, teachers and all staff take an extremely positive approach to pupils' personal safety and welfare. Their actions help many pupils to manage their behaviour better, so that they are ready to learn.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the pupil premium and SEN funding are used effectively to improve the outcomes, attendance and to reduce the exclusions of eligible pupils
 - continuing to develop the leadership skills of middle leaders
 - ensuring that the leadership of pupils' behaviour and attendance improves rapidly.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers' planning addresses the learning needs of pupils, in order that the pupils develop the knowledge and skills needed to progress in all the subjects that they study
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations for what pupils can achieve and that they provide the pupils with work that is challenging and meets their needs
 - ensuring that teachers apply the whole-school assessment policy consistently well.
- Improve the quality of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - reducing rapidly the number of pupils excluded from school
 - ensuring that all pupils and groups of pupils attend school.
- Improve pupils' attainment and progress rapidly, particularly at key stage 4, by ensuring that disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and the most able pupils make good progress and achieve the standards that they should.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The leadership of pupils' attendance is weak. Pupils' attendance is not improving rapidly enough.
- The pupil premium is not supporting disadvantaged pupils to succeed at the pace needed. Some productive work happens, for example the residential activity to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Nevertheless, disadvantaged pupils underachieve and often do not attend school regularly enough.
- The additional funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not having the required impact. Until recently, this group of pupils did not achieve as well as they should. They are now making better progress in key stage 3, but they continue to underachieve at key stage 4. Many do not attend school as regularly as they should.
- The Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. A greater proportion of pupils who enter the school below the expectations for their age in English and mathematics are now beginning to make the progress they should.
- Leaders have worked resolutely to improve the school. The executive headteacher has been creative in her exhaustive efforts to enrich the learning climate, raise pupils' aspirations and foster their belief in themselves. As a result, the school is beginning to be a place where the majority of pupils obey the rules of the school, conduct themselves well and are ready to learn in their lessons. However, these improvements have not had a sufficiently rapid impact on outcomes for pupils. Too many are excluded from school and some do not attend school as often as they need to.
- Performance management has been used successfully to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of the staff have access to a variety of professional development opportunities that include studying for national leadership qualifications. Teachers are able to share and to learn from the good practice that exists within the school, for example the many positive developments taking place in English and the new assessment practice being piloted in science. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment, although inconsistent in quality, is improving.
- Middle leaders are keen and ambitious to improve the school. Many are new to leadership but have begun their work well. The heads of house have rightly ensured a laser-like focus on the achievement of the pupils that they oversee. They know the progress of every pupil and ensure that those who need it receive support to catch up. New leadership in mathematics is helping to turn this department around. Recent information indicates that pupils' progress at key stage 4 is accelerating in this subject. This group of talented leaders is important to the future of the school.
- The SEN coordinator (SENCo) is relatively recent to the role. She has a strong personal commitment to improving provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Her knowledge of the pupils is good. More are now receiving the provision that they require in order that their progress accelerates. This is more evident in key stage 3.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is effective. The leader with this responsibility has an accurate view of the strengths in teaching and the areas in need

of improvement. Efforts to develop teachers' professional skills and aptitudes are appreciated by staff, who view them as 'developmental and supportive'. The leader's actions have encouraged the ambition and dedication of teachers to refine their skills, in order to meet the needs of pupils.

- The executive headteacher has helped to regain positive relationships between the school and the local community. The majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that they felt that the school was well led and that they would recommend it to others.
- The pupils are provided with wide-ranging opportunities to broaden their experiences and learn how to be an effective citizen. Community projects and events involve pupils in a range of meaningful deeds, including with the local church. Art, music and theatre are promoted and regular openings are provided for pupils to build their confidence through performance. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the additional opportunities that they receive, including performing music at important social events. The pupils have extensive chances to develop sporting talents and include enjoying the schools enviable resources, in order to develop their cycling prowess.

Governance of the school

- Governors are skilled and knowledgeable. They have supported leaders through some extremely difficult times. Their actions have helped to improve the teaching at the school and to regain the confidence of the community.
- Governors have not ensured that additional funding to the school has had the required impact for eligible pupils. They have not focused closely enough on the progress that these pupils make.
- The governing body has made sure that appropriate policies are in place to meet requirements and promote school improvement. As a result, the school is now a better learning environment for pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils are known extremely well by all members of staff. Effective steps are taken to safeguard pupils' welfare. This includes promoting equalities with the pupils. The school is a designated 'Stonewall school' and takes seriously the prevention of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) language and bullying.
- Many of the pupils attending the school have complex needs. They require a vast array of help before they can settle to their learning. The most vulnerable pupils receive extensive support and are treated with great care. The school undertakes wide-ranging actions to build pupils' confidence and, as a result, they are trusting of school staff. Even if they have a bad day, the pupils are regularly given a chance for a new start. This includes when they return from a school exclusion.
- The designated safeguarding leaders are formidable in their efforts to make sure that the pupils gain the support that they need.
- The safeguarding policy is up to date and training for all staff is comprehensive. The staff are updated regularly. They know the processes to follow, if they have any

concerns. They comply with the processes well.

- Pupils said that they felt well-informed about how to keep themselves safe from harm. They appreciated the opportunities that they received to learn about sensitive issues, including child sexual exploitation, consent and radicalisation. They were able to discuss sensibly many of the key issues that concerned them. All of the pupils spoken to could name many staff in school to whom they could confidently speak, if they had a problem, or if they needed help.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers apply the whole-school assessment policy inconsistently. In some subjects, for example, in science and in English, pupils receive very clear guidance about how to improve their work. This helps pupils make progress. In other subject areas, such as history, staff do not follow the assessment policy closely enough and pupils are not helped to improve as effectively. Consequently, they repeat the same mistakes, fail to have their misconceptions corrected, or produce poorer quality work.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent within subject areas and between different subject areas. In some subjects, such as in physical education (PE) and in science, pupils are involved in a range of activities that capture their imagination and help them to learn.
- Some teaching is less successful. In the least successful lessons, teachers' planning does not address pupils' learning needs. Consequently, pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and the most able, make much less progress than they should, for example in history.
- When teaching, learning and assessment are weak, pupils' behaviour deteriorates. They understandably lose interest, are off-task and become bored.
- Often, teachers miss opportunities to probe the understanding, deepen the thinking and extend the vocabulary of the most able pupils. They do not provide routine occasions for these pupils to apply their knowledge or to solve problems. The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Teachers work together on a weekly basis to share teaching strategies, good ideas and ways in which to engage, enthuse and encourage pupils to progress. These sessions are incredibly helpful. Evidence in lessons indicates that more teachers are now using interesting ways to help pupils to learn. One pupil commented, 'I think teachers are very supportive and inspiring.'
- The teachers find many creative solutions to support pupils in their learning. For example, some Year 11 pupils receive individualised tuition and coaching from Year 12 pupils in a Buckinghamshire school via the internet. Pupils who receive this support greatly appreciate it. As a result of receiving it, their confidence and use of language has improved.
- Pupils have access to their own tablet computers. They are able to use these in all of their lessons and to complete work outside of school. Pupils universally appreciate this resource. Inspectors observed this technology being used highly effectively by teachers

in a Year 8 geography lesson. The teacher was able to bring the learning about the ecosystem alive to this group of pupils. Many of the pupils were highly motivated as

their knowledge increased.

- The majority of lessons are characterised by strong teacher and pupil relationships. Staff know pupils and their needs well. In better lessons, teachers make the best of these relationships to challenge and to test pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, in science, pupils were observed hypothesising eagerly about the results of an experiment to remove oxygen from plants. Pupils, bubbling with ideas and enthusiasm, were making progress and enjoying their learning.
- Pupils' learning is not restricted to the school day. Many receive learning opportunities after school. Many arrive early to school for additional help. Considerable effort is made to encourage pupils' enthusiasms, to practice for examinations, or to develop a talent. Inspectors observed pupils after school in music, in design and technology, and in PE receiving individualised help from their teachers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Although there have been some advancements, too few pupils experience the triumph of achieving as a successful and confident learner.
- Pupils said that bullying in school was rare. They said that any issues were dealt with promptly by their teachers. Pupils said that the school had 'really improved' under the leadership of the executive headteacher.
- PE staff are passionate about improving the health of the school community. Pupils' welfare is taken extremely seriously. All are involved in testing and subsequent training to improve their fitness. This initiative is in direct response to, and having a positive impact on, concerns about the future well-being of all pupils and their community.
- Leaders' efforts to build pupils' self-confidence as learners is beginning to bear fruit. For example, the pupils spoke to inspectors about their ambitions. They have been given better, effective careers advice and guidance to support their future plans.
- Pupils value the many ways in which they gain appreciation and validation for their efforts. The staff create chances to reward pupils' efforts. 'Pizza Wednesday' is a particular hit. Staff send postcards home to inform parents about their children's achievements. Both parents and pupils appreciate staff sending these.

Behaviour

- The pupils' behaviour is inadequate.
- The proportion of pupils excluded from school, although decreasing, is much higher than the national average and remains high. Some pupils have been excluded from other schools and have not experienced success previously. Many pupils require, and are receiving, opportunities for a fresh start. Increasingly, the actions taken to support pupils are working, but these are not at sufficient pace.
- The proportion of pupils that are persistently absent from school, although reducing, is still too high. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or

disabilities, are absent from school far too regularly.

- Pupils' attendance is not improving at a rapid-enough pace.
- The vast majority of pupils are polite, articulate and positive young people. They conduct themselves extremely well around school, in lessons and at social times. They appreciate the efforts of their teachers and take full advantage of the many opportunities that they are offered.
- Pupils said that they enjoyed learning in a bright and 'funky' school environment. They are grateful for the efforts of their teachers, who ensure that they display and celebrate pupils' achievements around the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- In 2016 and in 2017, pupils made significantly less progress than other pupils nationally across the eight key subjects studied at key stage 4, including English and mathematics.
- In 2016 and in 2017, pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 4 in English and mathematics was much lower than it was for other pupils nationally.
- At the same time, disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and the most able failed to achieve as their starting points indicated that they should.
- The proportion of pupils entered for the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and achieving this standard was much lower than in schools nationally in 2017.
- Although improving, pupils do not achieve at the levels they could in a range of subjects across the curriculum, including history and computer science.
- Not enough of the most able pupils achieve the highest grades at GCSE.
- Currently, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not achieve as they should at key stage 4.
- Information about the pupils' destinations after leaving the school indicates that, previously, some pupils were not prepared well enough for the next stage in their education, employment, or training.
- Leaders' information and work in pupils' workbooks indicates that a greater proportion of pupils, particularly at key stage 3, are developing the knowledge, skills and understanding required to catch up. There is increasing evidence that pupils' progress is accelerating, particularly in English.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive high-quality and individualised support in order to develop their English speaking, listening, and writing skills. This work successfully promotes these pupils' progress. They absolutely delight in the guidance and care that they receive in these sessions.
- Pupils' progress in some key subjects is improving. This is particularly evident at key stage 4 mathematics.

School details

Unique reference number	136476
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10023276

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.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	369
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Cherry Edwards OBE
Executive Headteacher	Susan Dench
Telephone number	01476 405 200
Website	www.wgacademiustrust.org.uk/
Email address	sthughs@wgacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2013

Information about this school

- The school is part of the West Grantham Academies Trust. There are two schools within the trust. The trustees provide governance to both schools.
- The school uses 'Build a Future' alternative provision. Currently there are too few pupils receiving their education within this provision to report.
- The school does not meet the current government floor standards for pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 4.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The West Grantham Academy St Hugh's is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It is a non-selective school in an area where grammar schools select pupils by ability.
- A proportion of pupils larger than the national average are of White British heritage. A

small proportion of pupils come from a range of different minority ethnic backgrounds. Most of these pupils are from eastern European heritages, often speaking English as an additional language.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils attending the school is much larger than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 24 lessons, some of which were seen jointly with senior leaders. During lesson observations, inspectors sampled pupils' books and talked to pupils, in order to evaluate the quality of their learning. Inspectors also made short visits to tutor time and to an assembly.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at break and lunchtime and as pupils moved around the school. They observed pupils receiving additional learning after school. The lead inspector observed a group of pupils receiving online help and support from pupils in a Buckinghamshire school.
- Inspectors scrutinised, in detail, pupils' books in a range of subjects. They looked particularly at the work of key stage 3 pupils. The lead inspector reviewed a selection of key stage 4 pupils' work with the head of house.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings with the executive headteacher, senior and middle leaders, chair of governors and three members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with staff from 'Build a Future', the centre that provides alternative education for pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in meetings, in lessons, and around the school at breaktime. The lead inspector met formally with a group of key stage 3 pupils and a group of pupils who speak English as an additional language. An inspector also spoke with a group of key stage 4 pupils.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of the school's documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, data on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding procedures, minutes of the governing body, and curriculum information.
- Inspectors took account of 17 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire, 50 online pupil questionnaires, and 33 staff responses.

Inspection team

Jayne Ashman, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Edwards	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Croft	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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