

Ofsted Reports

School report



John Whitgift Academy

Crosland Road, Grimsby, Lincolnshire, DN37 9EH

Inspection dates	11–12 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The performance of pupils in examinations in 2014 and 2015 was inadequate. Almost all groups underperformed, with particular weakness in the achievement of boys and disadvantaged pupils.
- Up until this academic year, pupils have made insufficient progress in almost all key subjects. Weaknesses in the quality of teaching, particularly in the quality of questioning and the use of assessment, remain in science and information and communications technology.
- School leaders have not used pupil premium funding effectively.
- Though there is clear and compelling evidence that examination outcomes are on track to improve significantly in 2016, older pupils are not secure in their literacy and numeracy skills as a result of very weak provision in key stage 3.
- Too many lessons, particularly in science, have been taught by temporary or unqualified staff. This position has improved but pupils still express concerns about the impact that this has had on their learning.
- The school has failed to ensure that pupils are able to apply themselves for lengthy periods of time to work that is difficult.
- Middle leadership is not strong enough in some subjects to ensure good progress for pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Recently appointed senior leaders and middle leaders have established a compelling vision for school improvement.
- Leaders' actions have already brought about improvements in pupils' achievement, attitudes to learning and behaviour.
- Pupils are happy and feel safe at the school. They are excited about changes that have taken place and how this will affect their learning and achievement.

Full report

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils, including boys and disadvantaged pupils, make at least good progress in all subjects and across all year groups, by:
making sure that teachers equip pupils with the ability to work hard on difficult concepts for increasingly lengthy periods of time
making better use of questioning to challenge pupils to think more deeply about their work
ensuring that accurate assessment, which is consistent across the curriculum, leads to well-targeted intervention and planning.
- Improve the teaching of science and information and communications technology at a pace which is in keeping with improvements across the rest of the curriculum.
- Continue to improve leadership and management by:
-taking rapid action to address any remaining inadequate teaching or subject leadership
-ensuring that pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding is utilised effectively as a result of careful analysis and planning
-ensuring that new middle leaders have the opportunity to access additional training and support, including working alongside outstanding practitioners.

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.
The school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

-The failure to improve outcomes for pupils in 2014 and 2015 has led to considerable reflection and analysis by all leaders. This inspection came at a point of considerable change for the school and for the trust itself. Newly appointed leadership of the trust recognises that, since September 2011, it has totally failed in its responsibility to support, challenge and improve the school. It has in fact acted as a barrier to improvement in reducing the influence and impact of local governance, providing conflicting and ineffective advice to leaders, and draining the school of valuable resources.

- From September 2013, the school began to appoint new leaders at a senior level who have proved critical in driving forward important improvements. One of those colleagues will become principal in September 2016, and under his leadership the school has been much more effective in challenging underperformance, recruiting excellent leaders and teachers, improving pupils' behaviour, devising new schemes of work, and establishing a robust curriculum structure. These developments impacted significantly in September 2015 and are acknowledged positively across the whole school community, including the pupil body.

- Leaders have been proactive in developing the quality of assessment, using opportunities to moderate and standardise assessments with experienced and successful partners. This gives leaders and the inspection team confidence that standards in Year 11 have been accurately assessed. Such processes have not yet been sufficiently established in younger year groups.

- Leaders have not been effective in ensuring that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are properly developed. Consequently, Year 11 pupils have to spend significant additional study time in English and mathematics. Despite this support, their key skills remain weak as a result of poor provision in key Stage 3. In planning the curriculum, leaders recognise the need to prioritise the development of literacy and numeracy skills with a particular focus on targeted Year 7 pupils who need additional help to reach national standards.

- The new leadership team has already had a significant and demonstrative impact in driving improvements. Current pupils are making more rapid progress than in previous years. Behaviour has improved, as has the quality of teaching in some curriculum areas.

- Pupils recognise the genuine desire and commitment among leaders to develop an inclusive learning culture with high expectations for the achievement of all pupils.

- Over the course of the last two years, middle leadership has been strengthened. As a consequence of that leadership, pupils are set to achieve well in English, mathematics, humanities and modern languages.

- The achievement of pupils in science and information and communications technology remains weak. Leaders have not ensured that the programme of study in information and communications technology is appropriately challenging or prepares pupils effectively for the world of work and continuing education.

- Leaders now have an incisive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are honest and sincere in their analysis and understand what still needs to be done to improve outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders have established a well-planned and extensive professional development programme, centred on the improvement of teaching and leadership. This is well supported by the executive principal of the trust who now has the opportunity to work closely with the school on improvement planning. The programme has already shown impact in improving the quality of teaching but the school recognises that much work remains to be done to ensure that all teaching is good or better. Newly qualified teachers are now given very good support and this is reflected in their consistently strong teaching.

- The school's performance management system has been rigorously applied this year, ensuring that teachers and leaders are held to account for the quality of pupils' outcomes.

- Leaders ensure that pupils experience a range of opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences and an awareness of British values. Currently the programme is largely centred around assemblies and some form tutor time activities. School leaders recognise in their improvement planning the importance of this area and the need to ensure that activities that promote a celebration of difference become a more routine part of the school's daily life.

- Leaders recognise that attendance needs to improve further. Much better systems to monitor and improve attendance are now in place and there is a particular focus on reducing persistent absence.

■ The governance of the school

-Prior to this academic year, governors have been unable to fulfil their function effectively because of the confused and incoherent work of the trust. As a result of its wider underperformance, new leadership has been appointed to the trust which is already proving beneficial, appropriately challenging and highly supportive.

-The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's failings in 2014 and 2015 and its current performance. Governors have been involved closely in improvement planning for the next three years. They share the vision of the emerging leadership team and have the highest expectations of pupils. Governors are determined to ensure that leaders are challenged appropriately at all times and that information provided to them is checked for accuracy and robustness.

-Governors recognise that they have not ensured that pupil premium funding and funding to support weaker readers who enter the school below national expectations is used effectively. Their plan for the use of that funding is not yet sufficiently robust.

■ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school works closely with all partners to ensure that keeping pupils safe sustains a high profile. Staff are thoroughly and regularly trained in safeguarding and pupils are provided with important information about safeguarding matters when appropriate.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

■ Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate because almost all pupils significantly underachieved in examinations in 2014 and 2015. There has been considerable variation in the quality of teaching and frequent changes of teachers. Difficulties in recruitment have meant that many pupils have enjoyed little consistency in teaching over time. This has limited their achievement in a range of subjects.

■ Because of the weak teaching over time, heavy emphasis is being placed in current Year 11 on intervention and catch-up strategies centred on English and mathematics. This narrows the opportunity for pupils to be successful across the full curriculum.

■ The teaching of literacy and numeracy has been inadequate. Older pupils are not equipped to succeed effectively in the next stage of their learning, or in employment, because their writing skills are poor. Older pupils also show a lack of confidence in the application of number work across the curriculum. Leaders have not addressed the specific challenges faced by very weak readers and this has left those pupils unable to access the curriculum effectively and to do well in their learning.

■ Changes brought about by new senior leaders over the course of the last three years are now having a significant impact on the quality of teaching. There is clear, emerging strength in the quality of teaching in English, mathematics, modern languages and humanities. Pupils are fully aware and appreciative of that improvement and there is clear evidence in the work and mock examinations of Year 11 pupils that their examination outcomes will represent a significant improvement from 2015 outcomes as a result of that teaching.

■ Teaching in science and information and communications technology remains inadequate. In science there is far too much variation in the quality of teaching; pupils recognise that where this is at its weakest they make no progress and become disinterested in lessons. In information and communications technology, lessons are too easy and the programme of study at key stage 4 does not prepare pupils well for their future.

■ In a number of curriculum areas the quality of questioning in lessons is challenging and requires pupils to think and reflect carefully. This is not consistent and in lessons observed in weaker areas of the curriculum questioning was superficial and only required short responses from pupils and little careful thought.

■ The school has worked hard to raise standards considerably in the quality of pupils' work in their books and files. Pupils are now required to complete work fully and teachers do not accept poorly presented or inaccurate work. As a consequence, books and files are of a much higher standard than those used by pupils in the previous academic year. Pupils themselves recognise the importance of this in helping them to learn in a cohesive manner and to have materials to revise from in preparation for examinations.

- The use of teaching assistants in lessons remains variable in its impact. At its best, as seen in a design and technology lesson with Year 11 pupils, the teaching assistant was highly proactive in her work and showed a detailed understanding of the needs of all pupils. Where their use is less effective, teaching assistants add little to the quality of learning in the lesson.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Some pupils, particularly those in key Stage 4, do not always value learning and some lack confidence in themselves, both academically and personally. This is because the quality of provision that they have experienced in key stage 3 has been poor and has not equipped them with the skills needed to succeed.
- Pupils are developing a greater sense of personal responsibility for their own learning because staff increasingly model this well. In meetings with inspectors, pupils were aware and appreciative of the changes that have come into effect from September 2015 as a result of strategies initiated by leaders in 2013. This includes a much greater keenness to do well in their work and to be ambitious for the future.
- Pupils are developing their understanding of the importance of physical and emotional well-being, mainly through a range of inclusive sporting activities which are available to them. Though the school's work to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is thorough, pupils themselves recognise a need for greater emphasis on developing an acceptance and celebration of diversity and difference. Some, for example, were not confident that a young person would be able to share with the school community that fact that they are homosexual without some negative consequences. Other pupils also felt that more needed to be done by the school to develop fully pupils' knowledge of other faiths, religions and cultures.
- All pupils felt confident that they would be able to talk to a member of staff about any concerns or worries that they may have. The majority spoke positively about the effectiveness of work in dealing with bullying.
- The five pupils currently in alternative provision are carefully monitored by staff. All are behaving and attending well and making the progress expected of them. Detailed records show that any concerns are quickly addressed.
- Pupils understand safety matters well because the school places an appropriately high level of importance on this aspect of its work. Pupils are taught how to keep safe, including when working online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- A minority of pupils lose focus in lessons and are unable to concentrate on challenging work for even short periods of time. Sometimes learning slows because of the disruption caused by poor focus and weak concentration.
- All pupils commented that disruptive behaviour in lessons was becoming significantly less frequent as the quality of teaching improves. Behaviour is effectively managed when teachers consistently use the school's behaviour system. Pupils appreciate the clarity and fairness of the system and are quick to identify the small number of curriculum areas where the system is not effectively applied.
- Behaviour around the school site is good. Pupils are well supervised and move sensibly and courteously between lessons. Younger pupils are relaxed among their older peers and the dining areas are orderly and calm.
- Pupils wear their uniform well and arrive promptly to lessons.
- The number of pupils who are excluded has fallen since the last inspection and records show that the use of internal isolation is also falling.
- Improvements in attendance since the last inspection have stalled during this academic year. Consequently, attendance rates remain just below the national average. New systems and tight monitoring are expected to play an important part in improving attendance in the next phase of the school's development.

Outcomes for pupils are inadequate

- Examination results in 2014 and 2015 were poor for almost all pupils. Boys and disadvantaged pupils performed particularly badly. With the exception of modern languages, pupils underperformed in all subjects.
- In 2015 only just over a half of pupils made expected progress in English; in mathematics exactly half of pupils made expected progress. Significantly fewer pupils made more than expected progress in English and mathematics compared to their peers nationally. This is because poor teaching and inaccurate assessment meant that pupils were not given the necessary support required to achieve well.
- In 2014 and 2015, there was a significant gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment was almost a full GCSE grade behind other pupils in the school in English and mathematics. There is now compelling evidence that disadvantaged pupils are making better progress and, in line with other pupils at the school, are set to secure much better examination results in 2016.
- Current pupils in all year groups are making more rapid progress between assessment points than last year, and close analysis of the work and mock examinations of Year 11 pupils shows that they are on course to achieve results which begin to move closer to national expectations.
- In 2015, boys did considerably less well than girls across the curriculum. Better teaching and assessment systems indicate that this will be improved significantly in 2016. This is confirmed by the analysis of pupils' work undertaken by the inspection team.
- Lower-ability pupils and those who have special educational needs have also underperformed significantly in examinations since the previous inspection. This is because the school has failed to address their key weaknesses in literacy and numeracy in the early part of key stage 3, resulting in them being unable to succeed in their work across the curriculum in key stage 4.
- Higher-ability pupils have made inadequate progress since the previous inspection. Very few of these pupils are prepared effectively to achieve the highest GCSE grades. Improvements made by the school in this key area are only at an early stage of development.

School details

Unique reference number	137464
Local authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10012017
This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.	
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	392
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Vincent
Principal	Mark Rushby
Telephone number	01472 887117
Website	www.johnwhitgift.org.uk
Email address	info@johnwhitgift.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 March 2014

Information about this school

- The school is sponsored by the Schools Partnership Trust Academies (multi-academy trust). A new chief executive officer was appointed in March 2016.
- The school is much smaller than the average secondary school and has reduced in size significantly since the previous inspection.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are well below national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or a disability is broadly average.
- The leadership team is new and evolving. The current vice-principal will take up the position of principal in September 2016.
- The school receives support from an executive principal at the trust who is a national leader of education.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2015, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Five pupils attend alternative provision at Seven Hills Academy. No pupils in current Year 11 attend alternative provision.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all year groups and looked at a wide range of pupils' books and mock examinations. Three paired observations were conducted with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors met formally with six groups of pupils.
- The inspection team held meetings with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and representatives of the Schools Partnership Trust Academies. Informal discussions were held with newly qualified teachers.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation including safeguarding records, self-evaluation summaries, the school improvement plan and assessment information held by the school.
- There were insufficient responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, to produce a profile of information. Inspectors took into account the views of 20 staff who responded to an online Ofsted questionnaire.

Inspection team

Sir John Townsley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Davies	Ofsted Inspector
David Pridding	Ofsted Inspector

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