

Lynn Grove Academy

Lynn Grove, Gorleston, Great Yarmouth, NR31 8AP

Inspection dates 13–14 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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

- While teaching is improving, there are still some inconsistencies.
- A few teachers still do not make sufficient use of assessment information when planning their lessons to make sure that work that is set at the right level for all students. This applies mostly to work set for the most-able students.
- There are times when students finish work only to find that no additional work has been prepared to extend them further.
- In some lessons, teachers are slow to spot when students lose concentration and do not respond quickly enough to getting them back on task.
- At times, teachers do not make sufficiently effective use of questioning to draw on what students know and to extend their thinking.
- Not all teachers mark students' work as frequently as they should or do enough to ensure that students know what they need to do to improve.
- Until the time of the Ofsted monitoring visits, academy leaders had not undertaken sufficiently rigorous checks to evaluate the quality of teaching or its impact on students' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- With the support of the governing body and the academy Trust, leaders are bringing about rapid improvements to some aspects of the quality of teaching.
- Students' progress is improving and attainment in GCSE examinations is rising. This applies across a range of subjects in addition to English and mathematics.
- Behaviour during lessons and around the academy is good.
- There are good arrangements to ensure that students are kept safe.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. The academy prepares students well for life in modern Britain and for the next stage of their education or employment.
- The governing body and academy Trust are well informed about all aspects of the academy's work and provide leaders with good support.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students during lessons and looked at the work in their books. Some of the observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher or with other members of the leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior, subject and other leaders, groups of students, members of the governing body and representatives of the Creative Education Trust.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in the 76 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View. They also considered the views expressed in the school’s own recent survey of parents and carers’ opinions and those in 41 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised the academy’s data about students’ attainment and progress, their behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors also considered documents evaluating the academy’s performance, its plans for improvement, notes about the work of the governing body and policies concerning the safeguarding of students.

Inspection team

Godfrey Bancroft, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Brian Hawkins	Additional Inspector
Paul Smith	Additional Inspector
Duncan Cooper	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- This is a slightly larger than average-sized secondary academy.
- The predecessor school converted to become an academy in October 2011. It became a sponsor-led academy and part of Creative Education Trust in March 2015.
- The academy's last inspection was in December 2013, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Since then, it has received three Ofsted monitoring visits to check on its progress.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups and the percentage who speak English as an additional language are both well below average.
- The proportion of students for whom the academy receives the pupil premium (additional government funding to support students who are in the care of the local authority or who are known to be eligible for free school meals) is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is broadly average.
- The academy currently has a very small number students who are taught off-site at Options East and at Easton College.
- The academy meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Promote greater consistency in teaching and improve students' progress by making sure that:
 - all teachers use the information they have about what students know and can do to plan work that is set at the right level and moves their learning forward
 - the most-able students always have work that is challenging and moves them on to the next stage of learning
 - when students finish work, additional challenges are provided which move them forward and improve their knowledge and understanding
 - teachers are alert to any student who is losing concentration, and intervene quickly to get them back on task
 - all teachers use questioning effectively to draw on students' knowledge and to extend their thinking
 - all teachers mark students' work as often as they should and check that students have acted on the advice that marking gives them on how to improve their work.
- Ensure that leaders undertake close checks on the quality of teaching and the impact it is having on students' progress and achievement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders have not checked sufficiently on the quality of teaching or on whether it is leading to students' making better progress. Recent changes, following on from recent monitoring visits by Ofsted, have resulted in improvements to leaders' monitoring, with consequent improvements in teaching and students' achievement. Rigorous action has been taken to eliminate some under-performance in teaching. However, leaders have themselves identified that these changes are 'work in progress' and that more needs to be done in order to sustain and build on the recent improvements.
- Academy leaders have yet to ensure that teaching across the academy is consistent. For example, not all teachers make sufficiently good use of assessment information to plan their lessons and others have not yet fully embraced the academy's expectations for the marking of students' work.
- Staff with responsibilities for managing subjects have received training to help them undertake their roles more effectively. This includes opportunities to evaluate the quality of teaching in their subjects and to gain a greater insight into the messages given by assessment information. Subject leaders have embraced these opportunities with enthusiasm, although they have not ensured that all teachers have a strong enough grasp of how to use assessment information to identify gaps in students' learning.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and academy leaders have a clear insight into what still needs to be improved. They have taken on board the messages from the recent Ofsted monitoring visits to prepare plans to sustain the current improvements in teaching and in students' progress. The academy's improvement plan is an accessible and helpful document which identifies precisely the right areas to develop.
- Many teachers have benefited greatly from training opportunities that have helped them to improve their performance. Appraisal of performance by senior leaders is now much more thorough and systematic than in the past. Performance management arrangements are also used appropriately to identify and reward good teaching for its impact on improving students' progress.
- The relatively small number of respondents to Ofsted's online Parent View survey were critical of many aspects of the academy's work. These include concerns about students' behaviour and safety. However, inspectors found these aspects of the academy's work to be good. The academy is working effectively to help parents to support their children's learning and to provide them with information about how well their child is progressing.
- Assessment arrangements have been suitably modified to take account of changes to the National Curriculum. The academy has chosen to continue to use National Curriculum levels to assess students' progress and this is working well. The Key Stage 4 curriculum has also been significantly modified to provide courses that are better suited to students' abilities and interests, and are more likely to ensure they gain increasingly successful outcomes. Students speak highly of these changes, the courses they follow and how the changes are improving their achievement.
- The academy makes good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The many additional activities provided are enjoyed by students. These include drama, music and sport. Concerts are appreciated and enjoyed by many. Students are successful in a range of sports. The academy is highly regarded for the quality of its boys' and girls' football at all age-groups.
- Students speak highly of the opportunities to join educational visits, such as those to Germany and France. The student exchange with Maine on the east coast of North America is very popular. Even students who did not go to the United States have formed lasting friendships with American students who have visited the academy. Students also speak highly of the ways in which the academy prepares them for life in modern Britain and of the advice they receive to guide them on to the next stages of their education or prepare them for employment.
- Academy leaders and staff do all they can to ensure that students are treated fairly and with respect. Arrangements to ensure equality of opportunity and the elimination of all forms of discrimination are very

effective.

- The academy is making effective use of additional funding, such as the pupil premium and the Year 7 'catch up' funding to provide support which help students to bridge gaps in their learning.
- Staff from the Creative Education Trust provided support during the period leading up to the academy joining it. The Trust provides training for governors, leaders and teachers. Trust staff also support the academy in conducting its self-evaluation and forming plans for improvement. This support has proved to be highly effective in promoting improvement in a relatively short time.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors fulfil their duties effectively and are benefiting from the training and support provided by representatives of the Creative Education Trust. Governors have a good understanding of all aspects of the academy's work. They are well informed about the attainment and progress of all groups of students. They are also knowledgeable about the quality of teaching. They visit regularly to observe lessons and discuss the quality of provision with academy leaders, those with subject responsibilities and with students. Members of the governing body have a strong grasp of what is working well and what is needed to sustain the current improvements. They are well placed to hold academy leaders to account for the quality of their work. Governors are involved appropriately in the performance management of staff and in checking that rewards for good teaching are aligned correctly with improvements in students' progress. They are also well informed about the impact on students' progress of additional funding and resources, such as the Year 7 'catch up' funding and the pupil premium. Governors play a key role in overseeing the arrangements for keeping students safe, and they ensure that these arrangements meet current requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students and staff say that behaviour has improved considerably. Students are courteous, well-mannered and show respect for each other and for adults.
- Exclusions were high in 2014. Currently, staff manage behaviour well and have worked very effectively to promote good behaviour. A result of this is that the number of exclusions for unacceptable behaviour has fallen dramatically to below the national average.
- Students of all ages are eager learners who work hard during lessons. It is extremely rare for learning to be disrupted by inappropriate behaviour.
- The large majority of students apply themselves very well. They are eager to answer questions and to contribute thoughtfully to debates. They are proud of the way in which they present their work neatly. They are also proud of their achievements and are delighted to celebrate the successes of others.
- Attendance has improved markedly, to the extent that it is now at the national average for secondary schools.
- Students are very willing to take responsibilities and are proud of the roles they fill. They feel honoured to be elected to the student council. They are pleased that adults are willing to listen to them and are skilled at presenting the thoughts of their fellow students. Students fulfil roles such as being a prefect exceptionally well. Those who support their fellow students by being pastoral ambassadors are highly regarded for the care and help they provide.
- Students are well informed about fundamental British values. They have respect for the law and are knowledgeable about local and national politics, democracy and the potential dangers posed by holding extreme views. Students also provide excellent support and respect for others who come from backgrounds and cultures that are different to their own. The academy is a Stone Wall Champion School. As one student commented, 'At Lynn Grove you feel accepted for just being yourself.'

- A small minority of students are sometimes distracted by idle chit-chat and lose concentration; but this is rarely to the detriment of other learners.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Arrangements to safeguard students fully meet current requirements. All staff are checked thoroughly to confirm their suitability to work with young people. Regular risk assessments are undertaken for all onsite activities and for educational visits and journeys.
- Students feel safe in the academy. For example, the academy ensures that they are aware of the detrimental effects of alcohol and smoking, and the risks posed by the misuse of drugs.
- The academy places great importance on students' well-being and personal development. Students are confident that, should they face any problems, staff will do all they can to help.
- Students are adamant that bullying is rare. They have a clear understanding of all forms of bullying, including the hazards posed by misuse of the internet and social media websites. Students are confident that should any incident of bullying arise, staff will ensure it will be resolved amicably.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- In the large majority of lessons, teachers have high expectations and ensure that students focus on the task at hand. Even so, in a small minority of lessons teachers do not do enough to make sure that all students are focused and concentrating.
- In some lessons, teachers use questioning well to draw on students' knowledge and extend their thinking. However, most teachers either do not use questions to extend students' thinking or move on too rapidly before students have had time to gather their thoughts.
- Not all teachers apply the academy's policy for marking students' work as effectively as they should. They do not mark students' work often enough or check to make sure that students have responded to the suggestions about how their work might be improved.
- The best marking is very effective indeed and provides students with helpful guidance so they know how to improve their work. Students follow the academy's policy of making their own comments using green pens when they mark each other's work and when they respond to the teacher's comments. Students say they find their involvement in marking work very helpful.
- The work set for the most-able and some students of middle ability is not always as challenging as it needs to be and sometimes they find it too easy. They often finish their work quickly and then mark time because no suitable extension work has been prepared for them.
- Assessments are accurate. The majority of teachers make good use of the assessment information they have about students to ensure that work is well matched to their abilities, builds on their previous learning and considers the stage of learning they have reached. As a result, the large majority of students are challenged with work that is usually hard enough for them and not too easy. In this respect, a consistent picture is evident that the work set for lower-attaining students, and for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, is well matched to their abilities and challenges them appropriately.
- Occasionally, a few teachers do not pitch work at the right level for students and especially the most able. This is because they do not make enough use of assessment information when planning their lessons.
- The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. If there are gaps in the learning of any student, swift action is taken to intervene and bring the student up to speed. This includes their spelling, punctuation and grammar. In this context, teaching assistants do an excellent job in supporting students. There is also an increasingly good range of opportunities for students to apply their basic skills in other

subjects, such as science and geography.

- Reading is promoted effectively. Teachers provide good opportunities for students to read for pleasure and also support them in developing their subject-specific vocabulary and reading skills.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- In 2014, the percentage of students attaining at least five GCSE A* to C passes, including English and mathematics, was below average and was also lower than average in 2013. This pattern is being reversed and standards are now rising.
- The proportion of the current Year 11 students set to gain five A* to C passes in GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics, is on course to be much nearer to that achieved nationally last year. The proportions of students making and exceeding the progress expected in English and mathematics is also on track to rise. This expectation is verified by the academy's assessment data, by the work seen in students' books and by the progress observed during lessons. The marking of mock examinations has also been moderated externally by subject specialists to confirm the accuracy of teachers' assessments.
- The improvements evident in English and mathematics are being replicated in other subjects; for example, in art and design, geography, history, media studies and science. Other subjects, such as physical education, have sustained their good track record in vocational course results.
- The work seen in the books of Year 10 students and of younger students in Key Stage 3 provides a very positive indicator that the pattern of improvement in standards and progress is set to be sustained. An increasing proportion of students in Year 9 are exceeding the progress expected from their below-average starting points when they joined the academy in Year 7.
- The academy has an excellent, well-stocked, modern library which is inspiring many students to become passionate readers. The Year 7 'catch up' funding is being used to good effect to help those who have fallen behind to improve their reading ability. This funding is also used well to provide additional support for those students who join the school with gaps in other aspects of their learning.
- The quality of students' writing is improving. This is clearly seen in English, but is also evident in other subjects such as history and science. Improvements are also noted in students' basic numeracy skills. This is because these skills are taught and reinforced effectively and students have good opportunities to apply them in subjects other than mathematics.
- The most-able students are doing better than in the past. However, these students are not always challenged sufficiently and the proportion gaining A* and A grades in GCSE examinations remains lower than found nationally. Similarly, some middle-ability students do not always do as well as they might when work is not matched closely enough to their abilities.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve well. This is because work is matched well to their individual learning needs. They are also supported well by teaching assistants in class or when taught in smaller groups.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged students in English and mathematics improved compared to the previous year. In both subjects, disadvantaged students were less than one GCSE grade behind their fellow students in the academy and just over a grade behind other students nationally. This year, data show that, the gap between disadvantaged students in Year 11 and other students is likely to be similar to that of 2014, even though a higher proportion of disadvantaged students started at the academy with lower attainment.
- The small number of students who join the academy from abroad quickly settle in. They make rapid gains in learning English and thrive in most subjects. The very small number of students who follow specially tailored vocational courses and are taught off-site also do well. The academy makes frequent checks on their progress.

- The academy no longer enters students early for GCSE examinations.

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	137541
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	462611

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	1103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Antony Oliver
Headteacher	Alison Mobbs
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2013
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