

# Wymondham High Academy Trust

Folly Road, Wymondham, NR18 0QT

**Inspection dates** 10–11 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- GCSE examination results are well above the national average.
- Students make good progress with their learning and achieve well. They are articulate, read fluently and write well.
- The quality of teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning well to extend students' understanding.
- Students feel safe. They are mature and polite and eager to learn.
- Vulnerable students and those with social and emotional needs receive good support from the academy.
- The new Principal and his leadership team know what the academy needs to do to become better and are taking decisive action to make improvements to teaching and students' achievement.
- Governors are well informed about the work of the academy and hold leaders to account for its performance.
- The academy promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The sixth form is good. The great majority of students who study AS- and A-level courses go on to higher education.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students do not have the opportunity to learn by themselves often enough because lessons are sometimes too dominated by the teacher.
- Sometimes the work in lessons is not well matched to the needs of all the students in the class and this slows down progress.
- Marking does not always help students to know how well they are doing or how they can improve their work.
- A few students do not attend the academy regularly enough.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 43 part lessons, 10 of which were seen together with senior leaders. Inspectors observed senior leaders reporting back to teachers on the quality of teaching and learning and students' achievements in lessons. Inspectors also observed two assemblies and visited a registration session.
- The inspectors visited the Gateway and the Portal, and also viewed an exhibition of students' artwork in the town centre.
- Meetings were held with governors, the School Improvement Partner, academy leaders and managers, teachers and five groups of students. They also talked to students about their work during the lessons they visited.
- The inspectors took account of the 152 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 38 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of evidence, including the academy's evaluation of its own strengths and weaknesses, improvement planning, information on staff performance and students' progress, students' work, and records relating to the monitoring of teaching, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Frances Le Pla, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alan Lee	Additional Inspector
Ahmed Marikar	Additional Inspector
Clive Allen	Additional Inspector
Piers Ranger	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Wymondham High Academy Trust converted to become an academy on 1 September 2011. When its predecessor school, Wymondham High, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The academy is larger than the average secondary school. It serves the local community of Wymondham and the surrounding villages.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed services, is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Most students are White British.
- In each of Years 10 and 11, approximately 30 students attend City College Norwich, Easton College, or Attleborough High School for one day a week as part of the work-related courses they are studying. A very few students are taught full time away from the academy site at Locksley School in Norwich.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.
- The Principal took up his post in January 2013.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching across the academy, including in the sixth form, so that more is outstanding by:
  - giving students more opportunities to take the initiative and learn by themselves
  - making sure that all teachers plan work in every lesson that fully meets the abilities of all in the class, especially the most-able and least-able students, and make full use of the skills of teaching assistants to support learning
  - using high-quality marking and feedback to give regular, clear guidance to students on how to improve their work and move to the next level.
- Increase attendance by working closely with the families of the small group of students who do not attend regularly.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the academy with levels of attainment in English and mathematics that are typically well above average for their age. They make good progress through the academy and GCSE examination results at the end of Year 11 were well above average in 2012.
- Students who took their GCSE in English last year made rapid progress since starting in Year 7, and the proportion gaining A\* or A grades at the end of the course was well above average. In mathematics, progress was good and the proportions both making and exceeding the progress expected nationally compared favourably with the national average. The proportion of students gaining A\* to C grades in their examinations was well above average.
- Inspection evidence and academy data show that students are continuing to make good progress. This is because the academy monitors the progress of all students regularly, giving additional help to those who need to catch up through the 'helpline' sessions held after school.
- Where appropriate, students are entered early for GCSE mathematics examinations. There is no evidence that this causes students, particularly more-able students, to attain lower final grades than they would do otherwise. This year's provisional results for the students entered early for their mathematics examinations show a substantial rise in the number of students gaining A\* or A grades compared with 2012.
- Students who are supported by the pupil premium make similar good progress to their classmates. Their attainment in Year 11 examinations in 2012 was nearly half a grade behind other students in the academy in English and mathematics. Students who are eligible for the pupil premium are benefiting from the additional help they are being given, and those in Year 11 this year are catching up in both subjects.
- The academy uses its Year 7 'catch-up' funding well to provide intensive small-class teaching for a group of students at the Gateway on the school site. As a result, these students are making rapid progress in improving their reading and writing skills.
- The academy fosters good relationships, tackles discrimination and works to remove barriers to learning so that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed. Because of this, the achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is similar to that of other students.
- The progress of students who attend college or another institution for part of the week is monitored closely. They make good progress on their courses.
- Literacy, communication and mathematical skills are strong among students of all ages. They read fluently and write well. They are very articulate when they answer questions and during discussions.
- Although there is some variation between subjects, sixth-form students typically gain AS- and A-level results that are above average. They achieve well in response to good teaching, and the great majority enter higher education and gain places at university.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Good teaching across Years 7 to 13, with some that is outstanding, means that students learn at a good pace. Teachers use a variety of different activities in lessons, including group work and discussions. These, coupled with teachers' good subject knowledge, engage students well.
- Teachers use probing questions that extend students' understanding. Students respond well in lessons and listen attentively to teachers and each other. In a Year 8 history lesson, the students made good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the Battle of the Atlantic in the Second World War as a result of the teacher's use of questions to tease out their understanding of a complicated table of information about the ships and submarines involved.
- Teachers communicate high expectations for what students should achieve and set a positive atmosphere for learning in lessons. As a result students are interested, engaged and eager to learn.
- Teachers plan learning in lessons carefully so it builds on previous work, and set a brisk pace. Outstanding teaching in a Year 7 English lesson on food and friendships ensured a rapid pace of learning, and sharply focused class discussion was enhanced by individual support from the teacher. These strengths led to students of lower ability making rapid progress in their writing skills, and by the end of the lesson they could write their own paragraph about the snacks they enjoyed.
- Students very much appreciate all the support they receive from their teachers and feel it really encourages them to succeed. Teachers are keen to ensure that students have the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in examinations. However, they are sometimes so zealous in trying to convey knowledge that they spend too long talking at the students and do not give them enough time or opportunity to find things out for themselves.
- The quality of marking varies considerably across the academy. The best contains high-quality written feedback, which gives students a clear indication of the level that they are working at, together with detailed and helpful guidance on how to improve their work. However, too much marking consists only of brief comments with very little guidance on how to reach the next level.
- A small amount of teaching requires improvement. This is usually because the work is not well matched to the different ability levels of all the students in the class, especially the most and least able. In these lessons, students do not make as much progress as they could because their tasks are too easy or too hard, and teachers do not make enough use of teaching assistants to help all students make rapid progress.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Students are well motivated and behave well in lessons and around the academy. They are mature, polite and courteous in their dealings with adults and other students. The great majority of parents are correct in their view that the academy makes sure that students behave well.
- Attitudes to learning are also good. For example, in science, students worked well in pairs to share their ideas about the uses of fungi and then contributed their ideas to the whole-class discussion. Just occasionally, students lose focus when the work is not sufficiently challenging for them or the teacher talks for too long that it stifles their independent work.
- Students say they feel safe in the academy and bullying of any form is uncommon. Reported incidents are dealt with immediately and firmly. Students are well informed about how to stay

safe and understand the harm that racist or homophobic name-calling can cause. Students also know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

- Students enjoy the opportunities they have to take responsibility in their houses, the academy council or as prefects.
- Adults provide students with good-quality care. Vulnerable students and those who have social and emotional needs receive good support from staff at the Gateway and the Portal, and this helps them to be fully involved in school life. The students who follow courses on other sites behave responsibly and achieve well.
- Sixth-form students provide good role models for younger students. They act as mentors, and many regularly volunteer their time to help in lessons or hear younger students reading.
- Attendance rates are no better than average. This is because a small number of students do not attend regularly enough, and the academy has not yet persuaded all parents of the importance of their children attending every day.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The new Principal, supported by the senior leadership team, has a clear ambition and vision for the development of the academy. They are totally committed to ensuring that all students benefit from the best education possible. This is exemplified in the academy's new statement of its key purpose – 'inspiring excellence'.
- A well-focused development plan, based on a sharp and accurate evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, clearly identifies the right priorities the academy needs to work on to continue to improve. Leaders have quite rightly recognised the need to invest in high-quality training and coaching for all staff to ensure that more teaching is outstanding. Teachers value the training they get through the newly introduced weekly 'teaching briefings' for all staff.
- The academy has a strong system for frequently checking its own performance at all levels. Subject leaders, other leaders and teachers are held to account by senior staff, who in turn are held to account by the Principal and the governing body. There are regular checks on teaching through lesson observations, shorter visits to lessons and reviews of students' work.
- All leaders work together well to check the progress of students carefully. They use a range of extra help, such as 'mentoring' sessions and extra revision classes, to ensure that students' progress does not falter. The academy's current progress data indicate that these actions have been successful, and that results are on course to meet the challenging targets the academy has set itself.
- The management of teachers' performance is well organised and rigorous, and any underperformance is tackled with additional support where necessary.
- The range of subjects and courses taught by the academy prepares students well for employment or further education and training. Sixth-form students benefit from the broad range of AS- and A-level courses available to them. Learning is further enhanced by an extensive range of lunchtime and after-school opportunities, including those in sport, the arts and music, which students of all ages take part in. An impressive number of students take up the opportunity to follow the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

- The academy promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It provides them with clear guidance on moral issues in personal and social education sessions. In lessons, they have many opportunities to consider a wide range of issues and ideas about the world around them.
  
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors show a great commitment to the academy and bring a wide range of personal skills and professional expertise to their role. They have a clear strategic vision for the academy. They hold the Principal and senior leaders to account for all aspects of its performance. Governors fully support the Principal in managing teachers' performance so that only the best teaching is rewarded. Subject leaders are required to attend curriculum committee meetings during the year to report on performance in their subjects, and this helps ensure that governors are very well informed about the quality of teaching and students' achievement across the academy. They know how well students achieve compared to all schools nationally. Governors visit the academy regularly and are fully involved in deciding priorities for improvement. Members of the finance committee play a key role in deciding spending priorities and understand, for example, the importance of carefully spending pupil premium funds to close the attainment gap for eligible students. The governors make sure that the academy meets current national requirements for safeguarding and child protection.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137461
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	402759

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1620
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	400
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alex Hunter
<b>Principal</b>	Russell Boulton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01953 602078
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