

Red House Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135878
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	381946
Inspection dates	7–8 March 2012
Lead inspector	Paul Hancock HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of Students	11–16
Gender of Students	Mixed
Number of Students on the school roll	569
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Callaghan
Headteacher	Dr Therese Quincey
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

Inspection team

Paul Hancock
Michael Wardle
James McGrath

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

The inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 23 teachers teaching 26 lessons, including one observed jointly with the deputy principal. The inspectors met with the Principal, the Chair of the Governing Body and discussed the work of the school with students. Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, the safeguarding and equality policies, and minutes of the governing body meetings. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Questionnaires returned by 70 parents and carers questionnaires were analysed, as were those completed by students and staff.

Information about the school

The academy opened in September 2009 in a new building and is sponsored by the Leighton Group, the local authority and Sunderland University. It is smaller in size than most secondary schools and the specialism is engineering. Nearly all students are White British and a very small number come from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. The academy serves local communities in Sunderland, where for some time there has been a long history of low aspirations and disengagement from education. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The number of students entering or leaving the academy other than at the usual times is below average. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is well above average. This the first full inspection since the academy opened. About half of the staff of the predecessor school, including the Principal, transferred to the academy when it opened. Three new senior leaders and 10 curriculum leaders have been appointed since then. There are difficulties in recruiting staff in English and mathematics. The academy did not reach the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	4
Achievement of students	4
Quality of teaching	4
Behaviour and safety of students	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) 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 in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and the quality of teaching.
- The overall effectiveness of the academy is not satisfactory because students are not making the progress they should in English and mathematics and teaching over time is inadequate. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 11 fell in 2011 and results did not meet the government's current floor targets, and those in the specialism set by the academy. The progress of high-attaining students and those with special educational needs is inadequate.
- Students' inadequate progress is a result of weak teaching over time, largely due to staff absence in English, mathematics and engineering. Teaching is inadequate in a small number of lessons and the remainder is mostly satisfactory. This is not good enough to interest, challenge and motivate the students all of the time. The academy recognises there is some way to go before teaching is consistently good or outstanding.
- Students' behaviour is satisfactory in lessons and around the academy and students show positive attitudes to their learning when the teaching is good. They work well with each other and relationships with staff are strong. Behaviour quickly declines in a small number of lessons when the teaching is poor; consequently students become boisterous and show a lack of respect for staff. Parents and carers value the work of the academy and links with partners are good.
- Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory and the academy has the capacity to improve its overall effectiveness more rapidly and ensure achievement is good. The changes made by senior leaders and the governing body are making an impact and the legacy of significant underachievement is being tackled. For example, effective action has already been taken resulting in significant improvement in attendance, persistent absence, exclusions, and increasing the number of students

gaining 5 GCSE passes at grades A*-C to 85% in 2011. The governing body holds the academy's leaders to account and provides effective support to drive improvement. The governing body and senior leaders recognise improving achievement, attainment and the quality of teaching is now the top priority and that the leadership of teaching and management of performance result in improvement in the quality of teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and achievement to meet or exceed the current floor standard and all targets by:
 - making sure students always make good progress from their starting points, including high attainers and those with special educational needs, particularly in English and mathematics and engineering
 - ensuring all students are fully challenged and motivated in every lesson
 - increasing students' competence and confidence when reading.

- Ensure all teaching is good or better by:
 - sharing best practice, for example in managing students' behaviour
 - building on the current improvements in assessment, marking, and presentation of work
 - quickly implementing the governing body's plan to improve the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers.

- Increase the pace of the drive to improve the overall effectiveness of the academy by:
 - ensuring the governing body and senior leaders take steps to improve teaching more rapidly
 - monitoring students' progress more frequently and continuing to hold middle leaders to account for students' attainment in English, mathematics and engineering.

Main Report

Achievement of Students

All groups of students including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make inadequate progress in lessons and over time in English and mathematics as they move through the academy. Improvements in reading, writing and mathematics are inconsistent and, as a result, attainment is low when students leave the academy in Year 11. Nineteen per cent of students gained five GCSE passes at grades A*-C including English and mathematics in 2011 compared with 30% the previous year and a national average of 57%. Inspection evidence confirms the academy's predictions that more students are expected to gain five GCSE passes at grades A*-C including English and mathematics this year, although it will still be below the target expected by the government. Students achieve more highly on vocational courses and the number gaining five GCSEs at grades A*-C in all subjects in 2011 was above the national average. This contributes to the parents' and carers' view that students are doing well at the academy, although the inspection evidence indicates is not the case because too few gain higher grades in English and mathematics.

Students show a willingness to learn and have positive attitudes when tasks are challenging and meet their needs. Students say they enjoy these challenging lessons which engage them productively but they quickly lose interest when the work is mundane and repetitive. The progress of high-attaining boys and girls is inadequate because work is insufficiently challenging and different for them to help them achieve as well as they should. Students' communication skills are often not sufficient to apply them across the curriculum or for to prepare them adequately for the next stage of education. For example, inspectors listened to some students read in Year 7 and Year 8. This showed their competence and confidence is low and too much time is spent practising reading and not developing their skills, for example, in understanding what they are reading about. Achievement and attainment in engineering, which is the specialist subject, was close to meeting the academy's targets in 2010 but fell well short of them in 2011.

Quality of teaching

Students make inadequate progress because the quality of teaching is inconsistent over time and expectations are not high enough. Observations of teaching in lessons confirmed that there is not enough good teaching to enthuse and engage students, especially in English, mathematics and engineering and no outstanding teaching was observed. The features of inadequate teaching observed during the inspection included long introductions to lessons, a slow pace of learning, lack of challenge, and inadequate management of behaviour. Students spent too much time listening to teachers talk and rather than engaging in their own work.

Students' limited communication skills further inhibit learning and progress, which is compounded by long-term staff absence and the frequent change of teachers. Good teaching was observed and this was characterised by high quality questioning which made students think for themselves and moved learning forward. In these lessons, teachers expected confident replies from students which helped raise their self-esteem. The teaching also provided individual programmes of study that are well matched to students' ability and starting points.

Assessment practice including marking is more effective because new approaches and systems have been introduced. There is still some way to go before it is consistently good in all subjects. The teaching and planned curriculum make a positive impact on students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, for example, students in Year 8 were involved in a fair-trade game during the inspection and their social skills were developed by working in teams, together with their moral and cultural understanding of other countries. All parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt their child was well taught at the academy. The inspection team found that there is some good teaching, but that over time teaching does not have a good enough impact on students' progress.

Behaviour and safety of Students

Students' behaviour is satisfactory in lessons, over time, and around the academy building. This is the result of effective action by senior leaders to ensure the behaviour management policy is followed and students know what is expected of them. There are instances of poor behaviour in a few lessons as a result of weak teaching and a slow response to implement the policy. The behaviour of a small number of students is poor, notably in Year 7 when they join the academy and they do not respond well to intervention.

Nearly all students say that they feel safe and incidents of all types of bullying are effectively dealt with. A small number of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire felt the academy did not deal with bullying well. Their concerns were thoroughly investigated and no evidence was found to say this was the case. Attendance has significantly improved over time and is now close to average this term. Procedures are more robust and students' punctuality has also improved. The number of students who are persistent absentees or have been excluded has significantly reduced.

Leadership and management

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory and the academy has sufficient capacity to make improvements. This has been demonstrated through significant improvements in students' behaviour and attendance and a reduction in persistent absence and the number of exclusions. The strategic vision of senior leaders and the governing body is clear although the pace and rate of improvement has not been rapid enough to secure good achievement, progress and teaching. The professional development of teachers, which is one of the key elements of the improvement plan, has yet to make the impact which was expected. Self-evaluation is largely accurate.

The governing body provides effective support to drive improvement and acts as a good critical friend. Members of the governing body and senior leaders recognise that improving achievement and attainment in English and mathematics and making all the teaching good or better is now the highest priority. Safeguarding procedures are routinely monitored and meet requirements. The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and the academy's international links, for example, with Ghana, are making a strong impact on students' cultural development. The satisfactory curriculum is enriched with activities which provide a good range of opportunities for musical, sporting and cultural events. Equality of opportunity is effectively promoted and all forms of discrimination are tackled. The engagement of parents and carers has significantly improved and the academy takes their views into account.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its Students' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its Students well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its Students.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its Students. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the Students' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well Students behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Students' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well Students acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which Students are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the Students' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe Students are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Students' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



9 March 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Red House Academy, Sunderland SR5 5LN

Thank you for all your help when the inspection team inspected your school. Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say we took all their views into account. I thought you might like to know what we found about your academy.

- Red House is an academy which requires significant improvement.
- You are not making the progress you should in English and mathematics and your achievement is not good enough.
- This is because the quality of teaching has been inadequate over time in English and mathematics, and in a small number of lessons.
- Behaviour is satisfactory and you feel safe and well cared for.
- Leaders, managers and members of the governing body have the capacity to make the required improvements.

To help them do this, we have asked senior leaders to ensure your progress is always good by:

- raising your attainment and achievement to meet and exceed all targets
- ensuring all teaching is good or better
- increasing the speed of improvement in the overall effectiveness of the academy.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector

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