

Red House Academy

Rutherglen Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR5 5LN

Inspection dates 12–13 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students' achievement is good. From often low starting points, students make good progress to reach national averages on a number of measures. The school's performance against national averages is rising strongly year on year.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding. Their excellent attitudes to learning create a purposeful atmosphere in lessons, so that all are able to concentrate and do their best. Students have been convinced that the key to success is hard work and happily rise to the challenges set by their teachers.
- Excellent pastoral care underpins students' feelings of safety and security in the academy. Parents overwhelmingly agree their children are safe.
- Teachers have high expectations that students will work hard, so in lessons the pace of learning is brisk. They are ambitious for students to do well and are keen to improve their own practice to achieve this. Well-trained teaching assistants make a strong contribution to students' good progress, especially in sessions to improve students' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Inspirational leadership by the Principal drives staff to continually improve their performance for the benefit of all students. Leaders and governors provide strong support for the Principal's vision. They are determined in their ambition for the academy to become outstanding.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching and students' achievement are not outstanding overall. Teachers' checks on students' progress do not consistently follow the excellent practice found in some classes.
- In some mathematics lessons, the pitch of work does not accurately match students' needs. Too many students do not make the good progress seen in other mathematics lessons.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lesson or parts of lessons. Four of these were shared observations with senior staff.
- Discussions were held with senior staff, subject leaders, members of the governing board and students.
- Inspectors viewed the academy’s work and checked work in students’ books in lessons. They also undertook a longer examination of students’ work from the past year in English and mathematics. They looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to students’ progress over time, the academy’s view of its own performance, and improvement planning and safeguarding procedures.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for the lead inspector to be able to access them, so inspectors took account of 149 responses to the academy’s latest parental survey, conducted in February 2013. They also took account of eight responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Bernard Clark	Additional Inspector
David Griffiths	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

- The academy is smaller than the average sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority is well above average.
- The vast majority of students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is high; so too is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy makes no use of external alternative provision.
- As a result of its status, the academy works independently of the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of teaching that is outstanding and increase students' achievement by:
 - ensuring that all teachers make regular checks on students' learning during lessons, so that they move students on quickly and do not spend too long on work that is too easy
 - developing teachers' questioning skills so that they are able to spot when students need further questioning to develop their thinking and grasp of new concepts.
- Improve the consistency of quality of teaching in mathematics so that all students make the same good or better progress by:
 - ensuring that the head of faculty has time to check on the quality of teaching regularly, so that the good practice evident in some lessons is shared for the benefit of all students' learning
 - making better use of assessment methods, and the information gathered, in order to set the correct level of challenge for all students by drawing on the excellent practice within the academy.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The proportion of students who achieved 5+ A* to C grades by the end of Year 11 almost doubled in 2012, following a dip in performance in 2011. The progress of students known to be eligible for free school meals (over half of the group) improved at the same rate as that of other students. The academy's tracking data and inspection evidence confirm that this rising trend continues and has accelerated this year. Forecasts for the current Year 11, including GCSE results already achieved, suggest another significant step forward in achievement at 5+A* to C grades, including English and mathematics. Year 11 students are entered for GCSE mathematics examination in January, then some are re-entered in June in order to improve their grade.
- Students' attainment is rising quickly across the academy. This is strongest in Key Stage 3 where many more students are reaching the level expected for their age than did so in the recent past. Excellent systems help teachers and senior managers to track the progress of all students regularly and rigorously, and any students falling behind are quickly spotted and additional support is provided.
- Students who are supported at school action or school action plus are making better than expected progress, especially in their literacy and numeracy skills, because of new systems introduced to provide expert and sustained support. This ensures that students benefit from tailored interventions, which meet their needs very well and motivate them to learn. This provision continues until the intervention director is satisfied that each student has reached the expected level for their age and is confident in their use of these skills.
- The academy is successfully narrowing the gap in achievement between students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups of students. For example, the average points score for these students is now one level behind other groups on average, in English and mathematics. Funding is well targeted in identifying individual needs and providing a range of support to remove barriers to good progress. Resources for learning, including funding for trips, visits and catch up programmes in Year 7, and musical instruments and tuition are provided to ensure all students have equality of opportunity to succeed.
- A concerted drive to quickly raise reading skills, through initiatives such as the Accelerated Reading programme, the Daybreak Club and After-School club, is making a significant improvement to students' reading and general literacy skills. This is evident in the way students are able to think and explain in lessons, and in their ability to read and write effectively in different subjects. School data show that the progress of some students slows in mathematics because they spend too long repeating tasks which are too easy.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because senior leaders have had a relentless focus on improving staff skills since the previous inspection. School data show that there is a steady increase in the proportion that is outstanding because of well-targeted support and training.
- Teachers make increasingly good use of their checks on students' progress to provide a good match of work to different needs. In the best examples, teachers plan a range of tasks at different levels of difficulty then encourage students to select their own starting points. The effectiveness of this was seen in a Year 10 mathematics lesson, where students were seen moving on to more difficult work quickly because they were allowed to decide when they were ready for it. All students progressed at a good rate.
- This level of provision is not consistent in all mathematics lessons. Sometimes, more-able students spend too long working on tasks that are too easy and do not challenge their thinking.
- In many lessons, teachers develop students' thinking by skilful questioning which probes their understanding and deepens their responses. For example, Year 8 students made rapid progress

in their writing because of the teacher's careful questioning, which helped them understand clearly how to write in the correct style. Sometimes opportunities to develop a good level of understanding are missed.

- There are excellent examples of high quality marking and feedback to students on how to improve their work. Students value this very highly, especially in the lessons where they are given time to make suggested improvements. Older students were quick to point out that this quality of marking certainly helps them to improve their work, although they did query why it does not happen consistently. Sometimes teachers do not pick up quickly enough when students are ready to move on. Several examples in students' mathematics books showed teachers are not picking up when students are 'treading water' instead of progressing in the subject.
- Students hold their teachers in high esteem and value both the academic and pastoral support they provide to help them succeed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Academy records confirm the high quality of students' behaviour over time and that exclusions have dropped significantly as a result. Students are friendly and courteous; they show high levels of respect for themselves and others, and are welcoming and helpful to visitors.
- Students' excellent attitudes to learning ensure that time is well used for learning in all lessons. Students know they are expected to work hard and they do. They develop good levels of resilience and persistence because of teachers' high expectations and the excellent pastoral care they receive.
- Students welcome opportunities to support their own and local communities through suggesting and helping with improvements. They also acknowledge the needs of others further afield through their fund raising and direct support for a village in Ghana.
- Students are well taught to assess risks to their well-being. They understand the potentially harmful effects of drugs and alcohol. Students of all ages are able to explain the different forms of bullying and the risks of the internet. They are adamant that bullying is not an issue in the academy. The overwhelming majority of their parents agree.
- Students whose circumstances put them at risk of becoming vulnerable are exceptionally well supported by the excellent work of the interventions team. They provide exceptional support to students and their families to overcome any barriers to their learning and emotional well-being.
- Attendance has improved this year because of the academy's determination to help every student achieve their best. School data show a marked improvement in the progress of former persistent absentees, including those known to be eligible for free school meals.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership, including governance, is ambitious and resolute in its drive to continually improve the academy. Strong improvement to all aspects of the academy's work since the previous inspection is enhancing outcomes for students at a rapid rate. The academy demonstrates a very strong capacity for further improvement.
- Outstanding leadership and management of the quality of teaching and learning by the Principal and senior staff provide a relentless drive for excellence. Rigorous procedures are used to evaluate teachers' performance. Staff are well supported to improve and know they are accountable for the progress their students make. The academy links this performance robustly to salary progression.
- The skills and expertise of subject leaders have developed very well and there is now a significant amount of excellent leadership, for example, in the English and engineering departments. The academy intends to share the most effective systems for leadership so that students enjoy parity of achievement across all the subjects they study.
- The good curriculum takes account of students' interests and aspirations and provides a broad

and balanced base for learning. It is flexible and constantly reviewed to provide the best opportunities for students to succeed. For example, the decision to bring all vocational courses in-house so that students' progress is comprehensively monitored and supported demonstrates how rigorously the academy monitors the quality of its provision.

- The academy effectively deploys resources to ensure equality of access and opportunity. The achievement of students who are eligible for the pupil premium is improving quickly, as a result of effective and efficient spending decisions.
- Procedures for safeguarding meet requirements. Record keeping is exemplary.
- **The governance of the academy:**
 - Is highly effective, proud of the academy and its place in the community and ambitious for students to do well. Governors bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the service of the academy and show a sharp understanding of its performance through rigorous and accurate evaluation of performance data. They challenge and support the academy robustly over its performance. They have evaluated the academy's appraisal system and fully understand arrangements to link this to the quality of teaching, students' achievement and increases in staff salaries. They have approved the use of pupil premium funding for additional learning support and resources.

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	135878
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	408875

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

Type of school	Academy Sponsor Led
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	568
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Callaghan
Principal	Dr Thérèse Quincey
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2012
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