

Cathedral Academy

Thornes Road, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF2 8QF

Inspection dates

9–10 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Outcomes, while improving rapidly, are not yet good because the most able do not yet make good enough progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make good progress.
- Staff have not been trained well enough in how to get the best out of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in class.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are weak in science, history and geography.
- Teaching varies between subjects. There are weaknesses in science and humanities in particular.
- Teaching in mathematics, while improving, remains inconsistent in quality.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting principal has an accurate view of what needs to improve. He leads with vision, energy and complete commitment, with the backing of all staff.
- Students in the sixth form receive a high-quality specialist performing arts education that is an example of its kind.
- Leadership at middle and senior level have ensured that the rate of improvement is rapid and sustained.
- The curriculum is vibrant, interesting and rich. The arts have a profound positive effect on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has benefited enormously from its relationship with Trinity Multi-Academy Trust. This has been central to improving teachers' skills and improving leadership at all levels.
- Pupils behave well at all times, both in and out of classrooms. Bullying is rare and the school is a friendly, cohesive environment for pupils to learn in.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and outcomes further so they become good, by:
 - improving teaching for all pupils, particularly in science and humanities subjects
 - ensuring that in mathematics, good teaching practice is shared more widely to raise standards further.
- Improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by:
 - improving the training given to all staff so they have a good understanding of how best to support pupils in the classroom
 - ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants help pupils to become confident, independent learners rather than over supporting them.
- Raise achievement and increase the challenge for the most able pupils, including the disadvantaged most able, by:
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to write longer, unaided answers to questions, particularly in science and humanities subjects
 - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to solve problems and work independently rather than receiving too much support from teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- There have been swift, sustained improvements since the last inspection. However, the pace of improvement had been slow until the Trinity Multi-Academy Trust became active in the school. The acting principal and other seconded leaders have driven improvements rapidly. Teaching quality is improving, standards are rising and the sixth form has maintained its excellence.
- The acting principal is highly respected by staff and pupils. He is visible around the school and is driving improvements rigorously. However, he is also sensitive in nurturing the talent that already existed within the school, developing staff's skills where they were lacking.
- The curriculum is strong and very positively influenced by the performing arts which significantly enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors were struck by pupils' enthusiasm for arts and their confidence. The work of CAPA (Cathedral Academy for Performing Arts) Juniors, pupils who follow an arts-rich curriculum, is impressive. A performance seen by an inspector was almost professional in its standard.
- School leaders previously used achievement information ineffectively. This has been transformed through the introduction of data systems that enable teachers to find out what pupils do and do not already know. This helps them plan work for all abilities.
- Moreover, the sharp use of achievement information enables senior leaders to hold middle leaders closely to account for the achievement of different groups of pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged. This has had a strong impact on raising achievement, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Middle leaders who have been at the school for some time have learned quickly from the seconded leaders from Trinity Academy. Many are now performing well, have raised expectations of what staff should be achieving and have improved their understanding of how to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching.
- Performance management has been strengthened considerably since the last inspection. This initially led to a quarter of staff not meeting the exacting standards set and has improved the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics where previously there were significant weaknesses.
- The pupil premium is used well to employ coaches for mathematics and English. It is also used to support bespoke programmes of counselling. For example for drugs education counselling and bereavement support. This has had a positive impact on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to drive up standards for those pupils who are not yet ready for the demands of secondary school level English and mathematics. A computer-aided system for raising standards in English, for example, has enabled pupils to progress at their own rate and has raised standards effectively.
- The additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not used to its full effect. Strategic leadership of special educational

needs is not as strong as it could be. A programme of support for this important area of the school's work has now begun, led by Trinity Academy staff.

Governance of the school

- Governors have an accurate knowledge of where the school's strengths and weaknesses lie. This is because the information that is given to them by senior leaders is honest and presented in a detailed but straightforward way.
- Governors have a good understanding of achievement data, including how well specific groups are performing. They are aware that the most able need to make better progress and that the funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not having the impact they would like.
- Since the last inspection, governors very successfully engaged the support of Trinity Academy, in the knowledge that the pace of change was previously insufficient to bring about improvements within the timeframe they required.
- Safeguarding is afforded the highest importance by the governing body, which oversees this important area of the school's work systematically, making periodic checks on documentation and changes to policies and procedures.
- Development plans suitably focus on the achievement of groups of pupils. Governors follow progress towards meeting the various goals, frequently challenging senior leaders as they do so.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Policies and procedures for safeguarding are kept up to date with the latest government guidelines.
- Leaders work well with a variety of outside agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and secure, particularly those that are from vulnerable groups.
- Suitable checks are made on staff when they are recruited to the school.
- Training for staff on child protection related issues is strong. All are aware of how to be watchful for the signs and symptoms of when pupils may be at risk and what to do should they have any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is improving rapidly, but there are still variations in its quality because the progress that pupils make varies between subjects and between groups of pupils.
- In science, there has been some turbulence in staffing. This means that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in the different science subjects has not been developed well enough.
- Similarly, in history and geography, weak teaching has not built on the skills that pupils acquire from year to year. This has led to pupils having gaps in their knowledge

and being insufficiently prepared for the demands of GCSE.

- In some lessons, mostly in humanities and science, the most able pupils receive too much help from teachers. This stops them from solving their own problems and thinking for themselves. Moreover, there are insufficient opportunities for these pupils to write extended answers to questions.
- The quality of teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is weak. This is because teachers have not been given good quality information on what makes these pupils learn well, what they respond to or how to support different types of need.
- In mathematics, teaching is improving quickly, but inconsistencies remain which has led to some classes making faster progress than others. On the whole, mathematics staff have better subject knowledge of how to deepen pupils' understanding of handling numbers and how to ensure that their problem-solving skills develop well.
- Assessment information is now used more sharply than before by teachers because the systems are now available to them and training has been given. Feedback to pupils on the whole is sharp and pinpoints what pupils should do to improve. This is in line with the school assessment policy. However, on occasions, teachers do not always insist on pupils responding to the feedback, which then limits the effectiveness of the feedback they give.
- There are strengths in teaching. English teaching is consistently strong and is becoming stronger with pupils currently in the school. In these lessons, pupils receive challenging work that motivates them and, for the most able, ensures that they do the work with minimal help and support. There are ample opportunities for all pupils to do extended writing, which enables them to use a wide variety of their skills to answer questions.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of online safety which is appropriate for their age. Younger pupils understand the potential dangers and the advantages of social networking. Older pupils are aware of such issues as fake websites and identity theft.
- Pupils say that bullying is a rarity but that if they did have concerns, that there is always a caring adult to turn to.
- Through a comprehensive schedule of assemblies, pupils learn about life in a modern democratic Britain, about how rules and laws benefit society and the advantages and challenges brought about by multiculturalism in modern Britain.
- Pupils have opportunities to take on responsibility in school, such as being a head boy or girl, taking part in CAPA performances or helping at CAPA events and shows.

Behaviour

- Inspectors were impressed with pupils' conduct around the school. There is little boisterous behaviour in corridors or in the playground. This was particularly impressive given that on one of the inspection days, there was snow on the ground.
- Pupils wear their uniform correctly. The site is litter-free. Pupils are polite and courteous, holding doors open for adults and behaving well in the dinner hall. Shouting did occasionally happen at lunch, but only in isolated cases.
- In lessons, pupils on the whole concentrate well and apply themselves diligently to their work. Only on occasions, when the work did not fully stretch them, did pupils lose concentration.
- Attendance rates for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was investigated in detail by inspectors, since this had been too high in previous years. It had improved considerably as a result of the work done by the attendance team which now focuses on groups of pupils' attendance rather than the overall figures.
- Overall, while attendance remains below average it is improving rapidly towards the national average.
- Records of behaviour incidents indicate a reduction over the last year and an increase in rewards. This reflects the school's ethos of improving behaviour by rewarding rather than constant sanctioning.
- Pupils who access the YMCA off-site behaviour unit behave well. They are engaged in a variety of worthwhile, rewarding learning tasks which motivate them well.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils are improving rapidly. The outcomes of the 2016 examinations showed that the rate of improvement built on the improvements of 2015.
- Overall, pupils make average progress when compared to all pupils nationally. However, their progress varies between subjects and between groups of pupils, so this is why outcomes have not yet reached the point where they can be considered good.
- The most able do not make good progress. This is a key focus for the school. Their progress varies between subjects and too few achieve top grades in the subjects they take. Similarly, the most able disadvantaged, while there are few in each year group, do not make sufficient progress.
- Compared with all pupils nationally with similar starting points, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make good progress. They are sometimes over supported in class and teachers lack understanding of how to help them progress at a faster rate.
- The pupil premium is having a positive effect on raising achievement, although disadvantaged pupils still make weak progress in science and humanities subjects. Their progress in English and mathematics is accelerating from year to year so there are diminishing differences between their progress and that of others nationally.
- Those pupils who need to catch up generally make good progress in English and in

mathematics as a result of a range of special courses designed to boost their reading and number skills.

- The pupils who were heard reading did so with expression and fluency. The most able readers were able to talk knowledgeably about the books they had read and their favourite authors.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- The quality of education within Cathedral Academy for Performing Arts (CAPA) is inspirational. Rarely had inspectors seen such confident young people who were so dedicated to their studies and having such a commitment to succeed.
- The quality of advice and guidance students receive on their options when they leave is excellent. All receive a bespoke package of support, which usually involves mock auditions which are customised to the colleges, universities and conservatoires that the student has chosen. This enables students to be fully prepared for the different types of audition that they may attend.
- Those students who do not wish to pursue higher education courses in performing arts are given equally strong advice from careers advisers based in the main school.
- The teachers either teach full time within CAPA or are part-time visiting coaches drawn from the professional arts world. The professional coaches have a different, but equally effective, style of teaching to the teachers. This prepares students exceptionally well for the demands of the professional theatre and undergraduate studies in arts.
- During the inspection, drama students were seen applying their excellent knowledge of drama techniques to their own set pieces. Their understanding of practitioners such as Stanislavski, Brecht and Mnouchkine was impressive as they justified the interpretation of their own plays.
- In a classical ballet lesson, students who were new to the style received excellent coaching from a professional dancer. All students had a good grasp of the 'spotting' technique by the end of the lesson, executing it confidently with a good sense of balance.
- The curriculum is strong, offering either a performance or technical suite of examinations for students to pursue. Extra curricular activities are integral to the courses, with frequent visits to theatres and national festivals. One hundred per cent of students take part in dance, music or drama events outside of their studies. The school day is longer than normal to enable students to practise their skills and consult specialist staff if they need to.
- Students' achievement is strong. The average grade at A level is grade B. The progress that students make from different starting points is outstanding and among the highest in the country. Those students who retake GCSE English and mathematics have high rates of success.
- Students' welfare and safety is afforded the highest importance. All dance students receive support on how to avoid injury, including how to apply massage techniques to each other to avoid muscle straining. Time is set aside in the mornings for all students

to warm up, do stretching exercises and massage.

- All students take part in high-quality experience related to the world of work. This is bespoke to students' individual needs and career aspirations.
- CAPA is led exceptionally well. Both senior leaders have a wealth of specialist arts knowledge and ensure that there are close links with professional arts organisations. There is a particularly close link with a professional arts agency and many students secure jobs through this agency. The tracking of students' progress is high quality. Any underperformance is tackled promptly, accompanied by appropriate coaching and mentoring where necessary.

School details

Unique reference number	137764
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10019753

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	735
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	June Lawson
Acting Principal	Rob Marsh
Telephone number	01924 330640
Website	www.cathedralacademy.co.uk
Email address	rmarsh@cathedralacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is in the final stages of becoming a sponsor-led academy under Trinity Multi-Academy Trust. A number of leaders, including the acting principal have been seconded from the trust to work at the school.

- The sixth form is the home of Cathedral Academy for Performing Arts (CAPA); a specialist sixth form for the performing arts. Students often travel a considerable distance to attend and admission is by audition. Around 2% of the school population progress to CAPA. Plans are at an advanced stage for CAPA to become a free school in September 2017.
- One hundred and twenty pupils in the school form CAPA Juniors. These are pupils in Years 7 to 10 who wish to follow a performing-arts rich curriculum.
- The school uses the YMCA for off-site provision on a part-time basis for a small number of pupils as an alternative to fixed-term exclusion. Elite Training Services, part of Wakefield College, is used to enhance the curriculum at key stage 4 for a small number of pupils.
- The acting principal has been in post since September 2016 but had been supporting the school for six months before this.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed various lessons, listened to pupils reading and scrutinised their work to judge the quality of their learning over time. Some of these activities were carried out alongside senior leaders at the school.
- Inspectors met with three groups of pupils, senior leaders, middle leaders, members of the governing body and the chief executive of Trinity Multi-Academy Trust. The lead inspector also spoke with the diocesan director of education on the telephone.
- The lead inspector visited the YMCA off-site provision. At the time of the visit, no pupils were accessing this provision.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, so inspectors took account of the school's own parental survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised various documents in school, including those relating to child protection, performance management of teachers, minutes from governing body meetings and achievement data.

Inspection team

Robert Jones, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Moira Banks	Ofsted Inspector
David Pridding	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Lounds	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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