

Tollbar Academy

Station Road, New Waltham, Grimsby, Lincolnshire, DN36 4RZ

Inspection dates 13–14 November 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Excellent leadership, combined with extremely skilled and dedicated teaching have ensured that the academy's high performance has been sustained since the previous inspection.
- All groups of students make rapid progress; standards are well above the national average. Ensuring success for every student is at the heart of the academy's work.
- The proportion of students gaining the highest levels in GCSE examinations has increased this year, except in English, which lags behind mathematics in A* and A grades.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They are determined to secure the best outcomes for all students.
- Support staff make an invaluable contribution to the achievement and well-being of students.
- Students behave extremely well in and out of the classroom. They feel safe and show high levels of respect for themselves, staff and each other.
- The sixth form is good and improving rapidly. It is highly successful in helping students move on to higher education, training or employment.
- Subject and pastoral leaders are skilled and relentless in their drive to further improve outcomes for students.
- A constant focus on the professional development of staff is central to maintaining high-quality teaching, outstanding pastoral support and successful leadership.
- The academy makes a highly effective contribution towards school improvement in the schools in the Multi-Academy Trust and beyond.
- Governors are rigorous in holding the academy to account. The chief executive officer provides inspirational vision for the development of the academy and for the development of education in the locality.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 52 lessons, including several jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with a group of students from Years 7, 9, 11 and 13, and talked informally with others. An inspector also listened to a group of Year 7 students read.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, the Chief Executive Officer and representatives of the governing body.
- A wide range of documents was examined, including the academy improvement plan, evidence about the work of the governing body, data relating to students' attainment and progress, and records of students' behaviour and attendance. One inspector examined the academy's procedures for safeguarding students.
- Inspectors took account of 113 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 189 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Yates	Additional Inspector
Adrian Biddulph	Additional Inspector
Stephen Rodchester	Additional Inspector
John Townsley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Tollbar Academy is a much larger than average size secondary school.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is average. Very few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, children of service families or those looked who are after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is high; the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is low.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy makes occasional use of off-site provision in its partner academy, to provide behaviour support for a very small number of students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of the most-able students in English, so that it matches the high performance seen in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students enter the academy with attainment that is above average. By the end of Year 11 their attainment is high. In 2013 students' performance remained high, with 81% of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics.
- Students with high prior attainment achieved well in 2013 after a dip in 2012. A high proportion reached the highest grades in a wide range of subjects including mathematics, English literature, biology, chemistry, Spanish, art and performing arts. Fewer students achieved the highest grades in English language than did so in other subjects, particularly mathematics. Senior leaders have set a target to restore the academy's high performance in English at this level this year.
- The proportion of students making expected progress and the proportion exceeding this is high compared with national figures, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Students who enter the school with literacy and numeracy skills that are below those expected for their age receive swift, extremely well-planned and effective support. This support is funded through the Year 7 catch-up funding and enables these students to catch up quickly with their peers.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress from their individual starting points. This is because teaching is well-matched to their needs and the support to help them overcome individual barriers to learning is extensive, personalised and highly effective.
- The academy's pupil premium funding is targeted very effectively to enable students for whom it is intended to achieve as well as others. Students supported through this funding make similar rapid progress to that of their peers. The gap between their attainment and that of their peers in English and mathematics amounts to about a half a grade and continues to close year on year. Their progress exceeds that of their peers.
- Reading is actively promoted across the academy so that students are able to develop and refine their skills through regular practice. This enables them to work at research projects independently and at a very good rate.
- The very small proportion of students who occasionally attend off-site provision, at the academy's partner academy, make similarly strong progress to that of their peers and perform as well in GCSE examinations.
- The academy has used early entry to GCSE in mathematics, English and French in the past. The academy is discontinuing early entry this year.
- The sixth form is improving rapidly following the decision to discontinue the International Baccalaureate qualification and revert to a wider range of GCE A-level courses. Staying-on rates have increased dramatically, with the academy attracting numbers of students from other schools to its sixth form. This year's results at International Baccalaureate were high, with the majority reaching A or A* grades in four subjects. A very high percentage of students moved on to first choice university courses. Predictions for next year are similarly high because the increasing proportion of outstanding teaching is supporting a rapid rise in achievement for students.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The sustained high quality of teaching over time has a significant impact on students' confidence, attitudes and their achievement.
- High-quality teaching in the academy shares many common aspects which accelerate students' progress to well beyond what is usually seen. These include: strong subject knowledge; regular and skilful checking on students' understanding during lessons; meticulous marking, and the

use of high-quality questioning to challenge students to develop their thinking further.

- Teachers make very good use of their expert subject knowledge to present new information concisely and clearly so that students quickly become absorbed in new learning. Year 12 students made outstanding progress in their mathematical understanding, because of the teacher's crisp, clear explanations. These were well-adapted to ensure that students' prior achievement was taken into account when directing questions to develop students' understanding further. Confidence levels improved at a rapid rate as a consequence.
- The academy sets aspirational targets for all students, which translate into teachers' high expectations and an ambitious level of challenge in lessons. In all lessons, very good use is made of time for learning. Well-established routines and excellent relationships between staff and students ensure a prompt start and excellent engagement with learning. Students are expected to work hard and they do so willingly, developing high levels of persistence and resilience.
- Teachers develop students' independent learning skills very effectively. For example, Year 8 students made outstanding progress in developing their practical skills in a technology lesson. The clarity of the teacher's skilful instruction ensured that students were well-prepared for their tasks so they could confidently support and advise each other, thus accelerating their learning to a very brisk pace.
- Teaching assistants are well-trained and used effectively in lessons. They help to accelerate students' progress and encourage their independence successfully, including those students who have special educational needs. Several examples were observed of teaching assistants modelling learning for younger students by following the teacher's instructions carefully. This allowed students who were unsure to gain confidence and gather momentum in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Academy records confirm the high quality of students' behaviour over time, and that exclusions are rare.
- Students develop excellent attitudes to learning, which ensures that time is used productively in lessons. They show an outstanding determination to succeed; they work hard and develop the confidence and independence to reach their goals.
- Behaviour is exemplary in classrooms and during social times, such as in the dining hall. Movement around the academy is orderly and this is particularly notable given the size of the site and the regular lunchtime invasion by seagulls!
- Students welcome opportunities to support their own and local communities through suggesting and helping with improvements. They are generous fund-raisers for charities at home and overseas.
- Students feel safe in school because of the excellent pastoral support they receive. They are taught well to assess risks to their well-being and have a mature understanding of e-safety. They also have a detailed understanding of different types of bullying, including prejudice-based and cyber-bullying. They are adamant that bullying is not an issue in the academy and the 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 intervention team.
- Attendance is above average. Effective action with specific students is reducing the incidence of persistent absence.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The principal and the chief executive officer of the Multi Academy Trust share an exceptional vision for the academy's development and provide outstanding leadership to achieve this. Their uncompromising ambition for students is unanimously shared by governors and staff.
- Senior leaders lead by example in the quality and rigour of their work, so that middle leaders are inspired to sustain the highest quality provision and outstanding outcomes for students. Their monitoring of the academy's effectiveness is extremely robust, evaluation is incisive and honest, and actions taken effectively bring about the intended improvement.
- Students' outstanding progress and high attainment are driven by aspirational target-setting, rigorous and frequent checks on their performance and swift, effective intervention, should progress slow. The academy's outstanding data-management systems ensure that information is readily available to all staff and that analysis is searching and productive. The academy's promotion of equal opportunities is outstanding.
- The management of teachers' performance is robust and provides a good balance of support and challenge. Training programmes for staff are excellent. The programme of induction and training for newly qualified staff and staff recruited from overseas is excellent, ensuring that new staff are assisted to reach the academy's very high expectations.
- Strong collaboration at all levels ensures that outstanding practice is shared and expertise is used to promote the development of all colleagues. The academy has a strong and successful record of developing its own leaders.
- Partnerships within and beyond the Multi-Academy Trust make an excellent contribution to the academy's effectiveness. Close links with feeder primary schools, including regular visits from primary pupils for specialist teaching, are used very well to ensure a smooth transition to the academy for all students, particularly the most vulnerable.
- The dynamic curriculum is reviewed regularly and adjusted to meet the changing needs and aspirations of learners. A strong emphasis on students using literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects successfully reinforces these crucial skills and is a key element in students' high attainment at Key Stage 4 and post-16.
- Extra- curricular activities are extremely diverse and much valued by students. Enrichment in the sixth form is also outstanding, extending students' horizons and providing many opportunities for them to contribute to the needs of the local community. These rich experiences, the academy's ethos and the taught curriculum contribute exceptionally well to students' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The academy ensures that authoritative independent advice and guidance are provided for students at regular intervals as they move through the academy. This, and links with other providers and employers, ensure that students can make fully informed decisions about progression routes and that their qualification choices match their aspirations and interests.
- The academy draws on expertise within its own family of academies for support when needed. Leaders are remarkably entrepreneurial, resourceful and proactive. They have had a significant and deep-rooted impact on the quality of educational provision in the locality.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors show exceptional commitment to the academy's ambitious programmes for improvement. They are extremely knowledgeable about the work of the academy, so are able to challenge it robustly over any variations in performance. They ensure that funding is allocated judiciously and that the academy gets good value from spending decisions, such as those relating to pupil premium funds. Governors are rigorous in their management of the principal's performance and are closely involved in agreeing the salary progression of teaching staff. They ensure that all safeguarding procedures meet requirements and that staff and students are safe and secure on this exceptionally well-maintained site, and during any alternative provision.

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	136268
Local authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	426017

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2163
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Bond
Headteacher	Stephen Moon
Date of previous school inspection	2 April 2008
Telephone number	01472 500505
Fax number	01472 500506
Email address	enquiries@tollbaracademy.co.uk

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