

# The Grove Academy

59 Grove Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG1 5EP

**Inspection dates** 17–18 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Since converting to an academy, the academy’s performance has gone from strength to strength.
- Excellent support by academy leaders and excellent teaching ensures that all groups of students make rapid progress in English and mathematics from their starting points during their time at the academy.
- Members of the education advisory board challenge the academy’s leaders to ensure they have an accurate view of students’ progress.
- Leaders, and board members, make excellent use of the pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged students achieve as well as others.
- Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the academy and with the improvements in their children’s academic and personal achievement.
- Teaching over time in English and mathematics is outstanding. Activities match students’ particular learning needs extremely well. Expectations of what students can achieve are very high. Not all teachers, however, complete students’ record books to an equally high standard.
- Occasionally, students’ ability to work independently is inhibited because support staff sometimes do too much for some students.
- A very wide range of visits and activities engages students’ interests so that they make outstanding progress in their personal, and spiritual, moral social and cultural development.
- Many opportunities are provided for students to broaden their knowledge and understanding of life in modern Britain.
- Students’ behaviour in and around the academy is good rather than outstanding because sometimes it is unpredictable. However, in these instances, the academy’s staff deal with issues effectively and promptly.
- The academy prepares students exceptionally well for their futures through their rapid improvements in their achievements, behaviour and attendance.
- Most students enjoy coming to the academy. They get on very well with staff and join in all activities.
- Students are kept safe and secure as a result of the consistent practice of all staff.
- Staff are all extremely supportive of the academy’s leaders. They are very proud of the progress students make.
- Leaders and governors have a very clear view of the academy’s performance. They make careful checks on the academy’s performance, including the quality of teaching, to ensure that it continually improves.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students' learning in 15 lessons, most jointly with the academy's senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Executive Principal and Acting Principal, other senior and middle leaders, the Chair, and two other members, of the Education Advisory Board, and senior leaders of two of the feeder secondary schools.
- Inspectors observed the work of the academy and looked at a range of documents. These included the academy's information about students' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and students' books.
- Inspectors spoke to students and parents. There were too few responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, to represent the views of other parents. Inspectors looked at the academy's own survey of its parents.
- Inspectors took account of 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Henry Moreton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Wright

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Grove Academy converted to become an alternative provision converter academy on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school, the Harrogate Pupil Referral Unit, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The Grove Academy is part of the School Partnership Trust, an educational charity acting as a multi-academy sponsor mainly within the Yorkshire and Humberside region.
- It takes students from nine different secondary schools in the Harrogate area, which includes Boroughbridge, Knaresborough, Pateley Bridge and Ripon, as well as Harrogate.
- The Grove Academy provides full and part-time education and support for students who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to access mainstream education.
- All students present with social and emotional difficulties. Some students are referred due to medical conditions.
- Permanently excluded students are admitted following exclusion from mainstream school; preventative placements may be emergency ones to support mainstream schools and reduce permanent exclusion; a student may be out of area and in need of an assessment place.
- The Grove Academy has a transient population. Typically, students spend between one and nine months at the academy. Groups change on a weekly, sometimes daily, basis. The number of students in each group is small.
- Typically, permanently excluded students in Year 11 remain at the Grove Academy for the external examination year. Permanently excluded students in Years 7 to 10 are offered a new mainstream school place, brokered by the local Behaviour and Attendance Collaborative.
- A minority of students have a statement of special educational needs for their learning difficulties. A very few have a diagnosis of an autism spectrum condition.
- Almost all students are White British.
- Many students have a pattern of irregular attendance before they start at the academy.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The academy uses no alternative provision.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching even further by ensuring that:
  - all teachers complete students' record books to the same high standard
  - the intervention of support staff does not inhibit students' ability to work independently.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- Academy leaders ensure that students' achievement, behaviour and attendance improve rapidly once they start at the academy. This is due to very rigorous assessment and monitoring of students' progress, the outstanding leadership of teaching, and excellent and personalised support for every student.
- Leaders and the members of the Education Advisory Board have a very clear view of the academy's performance. Expectations for students' academic progress as well as their personal and social development are very high. Students' individual progress is checked by staff on a lesson-by-lesson basis. Leaders know how well they are all doing.
- The leadership of teaching is very strong and so the quality of teaching continues to improve. Leaders set targets for teachers that are closely linked to students' achievements and increases in teachers' salaries are matched to how well these targets are met. Staff responses to the inspection questionnaire show that they are proud to work at the academy.
- Leaders manage students' behaviour very well. Students are kept busy and the very effective range of activities ensures that the positive relationships between staff and students that are fostered leads to a calm approach to learning, leading to very rapid progress. A typical comment from staff is that, 'We have a complex mixture of students so behaviour can be unpredictable, but it is always managed well.'
- Middle leaders are very effective. They carefully check students' outcomes in their subjects and areas of responsibility. Their assessments are regular, robust and accurate. As a result, provision, including in English, mathematics and science, is very strong.
- The curriculum interests and engages students very well. They benefit from an excellent range of visits into the community to take part in activities, including horse riding, fishing, horticulture, land-based activities and outdoor education (such as the five day residential to the River Spey). These activities make a significant contribution to students' excellent personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors observed first-hand just how well all students responded to fishery and equine-related activities
- Leaders ensure that they provide many opportunities for students to broaden their knowledge and understanding of life in modern Britain. A comprehensive programme for personal, social and health education, which includes visitors, helps students to develop an understanding of different cultures and faiths. Students visit a Mosque and celebrate Chinese New Year. Students take part in fund-raising events for local charities.
- Leaders make excellent use of the pupil premium funding to support the achievement of disadvantaged students. Highly effective additional support, good-quality resources and a wide range of visits ensure that these students achieve equally well to all other groups of students. The academy makes sure there is equality of opportunity for all students and, as a result, there is no discrimination at the academy.
- High-quality advice and careers guidance is provided to help students make the right choices about their next steps. All Year 11 students who have just left the academy this year have a place at a local college or are moving on in to full-time work or training.
- Parents are very supportive of the academy and of the improvements their children make in their academic and personal achievement. A typical parental comment is that, 'If it wasn't for the academy my daughter would not have had any education for the last year and would still be fearful of any and all forms of structured education. Instead, she has had an amazing amount of learning and is now back in her old school and coping well.'
- Leaders work well in partnership with other schools. Together with academy partners, leaders have developed their preferred method of assessing students' progress, as there will no longer be levels in the National Curriculum. Leaders enlist the support of feeder secondary schools, which are very supportive of the academy's work.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements and are effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is very effective. The key members of the Education Advisory Board have the right skills to hold leaders to account for students' achievements. They understand the procedures for setting targets for teachers and they use these to reward the most effective teachers. They regularly check the quality of teaching and know how well the academy is doing because of the quality of information they receive from academy leaders and by engaging external consultants. They use this information in order to tackle any underperformance.
  - Members of the Education Advisory Board challenge the academy's leaders to ensure they have an accurate view of students' progress. They check the school's assessment information, which tracks the

performance of students to ensure that students are making rapid progress.

- Financial management is effective. Members check carefully that additional funding such as the pupil premium enables eligible students to achieve as well as others.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. Despite students' social and emotional difficulties, most behave well, demonstrating just how much their personal skills improve after starting at the academy.
- Parents and staff agree that while students' behaviour can be unpredictable at times, it improves rapidly.
- The behaviour of students when on off-site visits is usually outstanding.
- Students understand right from wrong. The academy's rules underpin all of its work and great attention is given to students' punctuality, language, physical contact, compliance and relationships with others.
- Students show that they enjoy coming to the academy because their attendance improves rapidly. Almost all students' attendance is much better than in their previous schools. Some make their own way to the academy. This promotes their personal development well and supports their independence.
- Students receive excellent care, guidance and support to improve their social behaviour, attitudes to learning and attendance. Staff, in conjunction with the targets set by the feeder school, ensure that student support plans are established. Staff ensure that students' progress towards achieving their targets are assessed very regularly in every lesson and at social times (including the start and end of day as well as both break periods). Students reflect on their performance at the end of every week.
- Students' attitudes improve and they become more positive. In the tutor group periods and personal, health and social education lessons, for example, students sit with their classmates and staff and take part in topical conversations with enthusiasm.
- There have been no permanent exclusions since the academy opened. This is due to the high-quality support provided to students and the strong relationships that exist between them and the staff.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a very high quality because of the extensive range of off-site activities the academy provides.

### **Safety**

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students are safe because policies to ensure safety are fully in place and are effective.
- Students have a good knowledge and understanding about how to keep themselves safe appropriate to their age. Students learn about e-safety and know how to stay safe on the internet.
- Students know about different forms of bullying. They say that staff deal with any issues quickly.
- The academy liaises well with the feeder schools and students' families to try to ensure safe relationships develop. The academy's support staff play a pivotal role in these links.
- Arrangements to ensure the safety of students while on visits off-site are excellent. Risk assessments are fully in place and students are aware of the risks.

## **The quality of teaching** is outstanding

- Students achieve exceptionally well in English and mathematics because the impact of teaching during their time at the academy is outstanding.
- Teachers work with students in small groups of no more than four, or individually. As a result, students' individual needs are met and the tasks they do are very well matched to their particular learning needs.
- Expectations of what students can achieve are very high. Close monitoring by leaders ensures that students achieve and often exceed their personal learning and social behaviour targets.
- Students respond well to the tasks set for them. The most able students thrive on the challenging work. Students' self-esteem and confidence grows and most want to please their teachers.
- A typical parental comment is that, 'The teachers at the Grove have been nothing short of wonderfully supportive, caring and amazingly creative. I have nothing but gratitude for their continuing support.'
- Reading skills improve rapidly. Reading books are of a very high quality. The well-stocked library, a focal point in the academy, is an attractive setting.
- Excellent teaching of writing is evident. Students have many opportunities to write in all subjects and

many enjoy doing so.

- Teaching in mathematics is almost always practical, supported by the use of effective resources. This engages students really well in their learning, as seen in a lesson where the task was to find the statistical mean using different coloured smarties.
- Teachers make effective use of questioning to challenge and encourage students' thinking skills. In one lesson, students had a heated discussion about the meaning of 'British Society'.
- Support staff are usually well deployed to support students who benefit from additional help, ensuring disadvantaged students achieve as well as other students and sometimes better. However, occasionally too much is done for students and this intervention slows the development of their independence in learning.
- Teachers check students' achievements on a lesson-by-lesson basis. Marking is of a high quality and the written and verbal feedback from teachers helps students to know how to improve. The quality of teachers' comments in students' record books about students' on-going performance is mostly outstanding but sometimes it falls below this, reflecting some inconsistency across the academy.
- Teachers manage students' behaviour very effectively. The lesson-by-lesson tracking system through the week quickly identifies any student who is not engaged well enough in learning.
- The most able students are well challenged and benefit from specialist teaching in English, mathematics and science. The art and food technology rooms, for example, inspire students to achieve well.
- Teaching for students with medical conditions, and those with autistic spectrum conditions, is very effective, ensuring that these students make similar progress to their classmates.

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- When students enter the academy, their attainment is almost always below the expected levels for their age. This is because many have missed past schooling due to their behavioural, emotional or social difficulties.
- The vast majority of students quickly settle and are soon keen to attend the academy. A typical parental comment about the academy is, 'It provides a service that is second to none and that I certainly couldn't have managed without. I'm sure she would not be where she is if it wasn't for it.'
- Academy assessment data, examination results and inspection evidence all show that students make outstanding progress, including in English and mathematics, during their time in the academy. This is achieved in a relatively short period of time. Students' achievements improve so rapidly that they make much better than expected progress over time. As a result, a high proportion of students successfully reintegrate back to mainstream school within one to three terms. Over the course of the year, the vast majority of students in Key Stage 3 were reintegrated back into their mainstream school, or moved on to a mainstream or special school.
- Students who arrive at the academy in Years 10 or 11 are keen to complete their studies and most work hard. Students in Year 11 in 2014 made excellent progress from their starting points. Most achieved good results in their GCSE examinations in a wide range of subjects, reaching their potential in English and mathematics. This represents outstanding improvement over the short time students attend.
- Students also achieved GCSEs in subjects such as art and geography, as well as some functional skills qualifications. Many students reached high standards in food technology and information and communication technology. Students' strong progress reflects their interest and enjoyment in these subjects, and this contributes very well to their health and well-being. As a result, students are prepared well for further education and employment.
- All groups of students, including disadvantaged students, those with special educational needs, such as autistic spectrum conditions, and those with medical conditions, achieve equally well. This is a result of the very effective support, excellent teaching and a curriculum that captures their interest.
- The majority of students make outstanding improvement in their personal development as a result of vocational and practical learning from going on off-site visits. Of particular note are horticulture, equine studies, land-based studies and outdoor education.
- Students' books are well presented and high expectations help most students, including the most able, to make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- 'Key Fund' is an integral part of the Key Stage 4 provision, where students work in groups to plan and implement events and this is presented to a panel of people of standing from the community. Students demonstrate the skills of negotiation, cooperation, logistical and financial planning as well as presentation.

## 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>	140077
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	450344

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Academy alternative provision converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	54
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jill Fraser
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Farrell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected as an academy
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