

Ashwell Academy

Snowdon Way, Bransholme, Hull, East Yorkshire HU7 5DS

Inspection dates

24–25 April 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, the quality of leadership and management has not been stable. This means that progress in improving the school has been too slow. The recently appointed principal has begun to make improvements particularly in behaviour.
- Teachers do not always plan effectively to meet the needs of learners. For example, low prior attainers do not have as many opportunities to develop their writing as higher attainers do. In mathematics, pupils frequently do the same work.
- Recently introduced reading programmes are helping pupils to develop their reading skills. However, most pupils do not enjoy reading and therefore do not practise reading independently.
- The school prepares pupils effectively for key stage 4 but does not provide sufficient information about the range of options available following the completion of key stage 4.
- The majority of pupils improve their attendance while at the school. However, leaders agree there is more work to do to improve attendance further.
- The curriculum has provision for pupils to learn about life in modern Britain. Nevertheless, further work is needed to enhance their understanding.
- Over time, the arrangements for school governance have not led to rapid school improvement. Recent strengthening of governance is enabling greater collaboration and skill development.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed principal effectively shares her vision for the school and in doing so is creating a culture of aspiration supported by staff and pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is rapidly improving and most pupils have significantly improved their behaviour since their time in mainstream school.
- Support provided from Aspire Academy is enabling the improvements that the principal wants to happen.
- Pupils are starting to make better progress across the broad and balanced curriculum. This helps to prepare pupils to successfully return to mainstream school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring permanent appointments within the school’s management structure
 - further developing the curriculum to provide more opportunities for pupils to demonstrate a wider understanding of their role in British society.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning improves by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan lessons to meet the needs of individuals, particularly in mathematics
 - ensuring that all pupils have opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum to practise the skills they develop in English.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - encouraging pupils to read for pleasure and develop their love of reading while developing their reading skills
 - widening careers education so that pupils are not only prepared for key stage 4 but also for further education, employment or training.
- Continue to develop strategies to improve attendance so that it is closer to the national average for secondary schools.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, the turbulence within the school's leadership and management has not enabled the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes to improve. Over time, pupils have made progress which requires improvement.
- Currently, the school has a number of external staff filling leadership roles. This support is enabling the school to improve as it begins to make its own permanent appointments to positions such as vice principal and head of English.
- The principal and vice principal are introducing a range of new strategies and staff development opportunities. They are also raising expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of this on the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The curriculum encompasses a wide range of subjects that support pupils to be able to return to mainstream school. However, leaders recognise that there is more work to be done within the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities to ensure that pupils have an increased awareness of how education links to opportunities for their future roles in society.
- School leaders are beginning to effectively evaluate the quality of education within the school. For example, by recognising the urgent need to improve behaviour and taking rapid, successful action, behaviour is now good.
- The principal has developed a culture of high aspiration for pupils' behaviour in and around school. Pupils are attending school ready to learn.
- The school makes use of the pupil premium funding to provide support and different strategies to develop pupils' learning. These are starting to have a positive impact on the progress made by pupils.

Governance of the school

- Working alongside the regional schools commissioner's office, the chair of the trustees recognised the need for additional support. As a result of implementing an academy management committee, the quality and effectiveness of governance is strengthening.
- The academy management committee and board of trustees are taking on different areas of responsibility for the school to bring about more rapid improvement, particularly in ensuring financial sustainability.
- The board of trustees, working alongside the academy management committee, are developing their skills of governance. They are increasingly able to hold senior leaders to account for the quality of education in the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- The designated safeguarding lead is knowledgeable about her role. She ensures that all staff receive appropriate training and are aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe.
- An effective system is in place to ensure that all safeguarding concerns are recorded and, where necessary, shared appropriately.
- Pupils say, and parents agree, that pupils are safe in school. Pupils feel well supported and they know who to go to if they have a problem.
- Pupils say they feel well prepared to deal with risks associated with sexting and e-safety. They spoke confidently about their own experiences and how they manage risk.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Not all teachers use pupils' information effectively to plan lessons that help pupils learn well. Recent improvements to baseline testing are beginning to provide better information about pupils' prior learning; however, it is too soon to see the impact of this.
- Not all pupils are willing to develop their knowledge; this is because the tasks do not always match the needs of pupils. Too few pupils commit to improving their work and so, for example, spellings do not improve rapidly.
- Opportunities for consolidating writing skills are not embedded across the curriculum for all groups of learners. For example, those who are the most able have more opportunities to practise their writing than their peers. Low-ability pupils do not make as much progress with their writing.
- Where teaching is more successful, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to interest pupils. For example, linking Shakespeare to modern-day Mr Bean helped pupils to understand key concepts in English literature.
- In some lessons, pupils develop their communication skills by discussing topics linked to their social, moral and cultural development. For example, pupils are able to offer their own opinions on the subject of dictatorship, while considering right and wrong.
- Teachers manage their classrooms well to ensure that any disruptive behaviour does not affect learning. Therefore, pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are, in the main, ready to learn and are confident to discuss and appropriately challenge their peers. There is an increasing sense of pride evident in pupils' workbooks.
- Pupils have access to a range of services to support their mental health and well-being, for example an educational psychologist and an autistic spectrum disorder teacher. This support helps pupils to manage their emotions, stay in lessons and learn more.

- Through an effective personal, social, health and economic education programme, pupils are learning how to stay safe and manage risk. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay safe online and while using social media.
- Lunchtime is a particularly harmonious time. Staff and pupils eat together and enjoy healthy home-cooked food. Routines are embedded to ensure that pupils use correct table manners and clean up after themselves.
- Pupils attending off-site education are also improving their behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Following the increased expectations for behaviour, pupils take more pride in the quality of their work, move around the school calmly and show respect to each other.
- While some incidents of disruption remain, pupils report and school information shows that these are declining rapidly. Teachers manage these incidents well so there is little disruption to learning.
- Leaders are addressing issues with punctuality due to transport problems. They are currently considering changing the times of the school day to mitigate these difficulties.
- Pupils' attendance is improving over time. Some pupils who have had particularly poor attendance at their mainstream school have made rapid improvements and have attendance much closer to the national average.
- Pupils are polite, welcoming and friendly towards visitors. They are keen to share their experiences of school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, pupils have not made good progress. This is because teaching did not fully meet their needs and effective monitoring and analysis of pupils' achievement was not taking place.
- There is little difference in the progress that different groups of pupils make. Leaders accept that progress needs to improve for most groups of pupils.
- Most pupils prepare well for transition back into mainstream school, particularly for key stage 4. However, some pupils have a limited understanding of the options for careers and further study beyond key stage 4.
- Following recent changes in leadership, a new system of establishing pupils' starting points and subsequently monitoring their progress is in place. This is beginning to help teachers understand how to meet the needs of pupils but it is too soon to see the impact on pupils' progress in individual subjects such as mathematics and English.
- Leaders' early analysis of pupils' reading has led to appropriate interventions to support pupils to improve their reading age. Leaders recognise, however, that there is much to do to encourage pupils to read for pleasure to develop their skills further.

- Pupils attending alternative provision continue to receive core subject teaching alongside personal development and vocational opportunities. These pupils are making more progress in mathematics and English because they are attending more.
- Current pupils' books show evidence that progress is an improving picture. For example, in English and geography work is beginning to build on prior knowledge. This is not consistent across all curriculum areas.

School details

Unique reference number	139483
Local authority	Kingston upon Hull City of
Inspection number	10048301

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of Trustees	Eunice Evans
Chair of Academy Management Committee	Carol White
Principal	Jacqui Thompson
Telephone number	01482 331720
Website	www.ashwellacademy.org
Email address	admin@ashwellacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	8–9 March 2016

Information about this school

- Ashwell Academy was inspected in 2016 and judged to require improvement.
- Since 2014, there have been significant changes in leadership and management, with the current principal being appointed in January 2018.
- The school makes provision for key stage 3 pupils who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools. Pupils are placed at the school for varying amounts of time with the aim to make a successful transition back to mainstream school.
- The school is currently oversubscribed with a higher than anticipated number of pupils being, or at risk of being, excluded from local secondary schools.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background, three pupils have an education, health and care plan and a small number are looked after by the local authority.

- The school uses the following alternative provision placements alongside home tuition for a small number of pupils: The Vulcan Centre and St Patrick's.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across a wide range of lessons and learning activities at the school.
- Pupils' written work was evaluated during lessons and during a book scrutiny.
- Inspectors observed pupils' conduct while they were arriving and leaving school, as well as during break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils both informally and formally, held telephone interviews with three parents and spoke with members of the staff team.
- Inspectors met with the principal, consultant principal, vice principal and middle leaders. Inspectors also met with the chair of the trustees and the chair of the academy management committee.
- An inspector visited external provision at both The Vulcan Centre and St Patrick's.
- An inspector had a telephone conversation with a school improvement officer from the local authority.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school self-evaluation report, school development plan and performance management documentation. Inspectors also reviewed minutes of meetings from the trustees and academy management committee, records of the monitoring of teaching and information relating to pupils' attendance and achievement. Safeguarding documentation and records relating to behaviour were also examined.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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