

# Lostock Hall Academy

Todd Lane North, Lostock Hall, Preston, Lancashire, PR5 5UR

**Inspection dates** 2–3 December 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Determined leadership has ensured that the academy has successfully tackled under-performance. Leaders at all levels are united in a purposeful drive to make learning at Lostock Hall the best that it can be.
- The school's management systems are clearly defined and assiduously followed. Quality assurance is rigorous and underpins the academy's accurate self-evaluation.
- Teaching is good. Teachers work hard to enthuse students; they willingly share their ideas with colleagues to make learning engaging and purposeful. The level of challenge is pitched right for most classes and most students find their work enjoyable.
- Achievement is good. Attainment is above the national level in most subjects. Students make good progress from their relative starting points; their progress in English has strengthened markedly.
- Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress in response to teachers' high expectations and the effective work of support staff.
- Gaps in performance between disadvantaged students and their peers have narrowed. Judicious use of pupil premium funding has led to improved learning for individuals because their particular needs are clearly understood.
- Pastoral care is a significant strength of the academy and contributes to students' good behaviour, safety, high attendance and willing participation in all that the school has to offer.
- Governors are key partners in the academy's improvement. They are purposeful, knowledgeable and highly committed to the academy and its community.
- Leaders and teachers work effectively with partner schools to ensure that good practice is constantly researched and adapted in the interests of Lostock Hall students.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small proportion of teaching requires improvement because a few teachers do not check students' progress sufficiently well during lessons, ask unchallenging questions or don't reinforce basic literacy skills well enough.
- Attainment in some technology subjects is below the national standard.
- The proportions of students making and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics are not consistently high in comparison with national figures.
- Boys' achievement across subjects is not as strong as that of girls and some disadvantaged students do not attain as well as their peers.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of subjects for different year groups and abilities of students. Four lesson observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed morning registration sessions and an intervention session to support students to improve their reading skills.
- Inspectors met with the academy’s senior leaders, subject leaders, special educational needs coordinator and several teachers. Discussions were also held with three groups of students, seven governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and the headteacher of an outstanding local teaching school who works in partnership with the academy.
- Twenty five responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, had been made in the last year and these were considered, along with email correspondence from the carer of a child looked after by the local authority and feedback from the parents’ forum.
- Thirty-six questionnaires were completed by staff and these were scrutinised.
- A range of documentary evidence was considered, including: minutes of meetings of the governing body and senior leadership team; the academy’s monitoring records; details of the progress made by students currently attending the academy; case studies of the impact of support for students; examples of students’ recent academic reports; attendance records and recording of behavioural incidents.
- The academy’s arrangements for keeping students safe were considered, including records of employment checks.

## Inspection team

Shirley Gornall, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Stephen Wall

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.*

### Information about this school

- Lostock Hall Academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students who are disadvantaged and therefore eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of students are from a White British background. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is below the national average and very few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportions of students with special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- A very small number of students attend work-related training away from school for part of each week at Eric Wright learning Foundation in Leyland.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The acting headteacher at the time of the school's previous section 5 inspection was appointed on a permanent basis in November 2013 and the Chair of the Governing Body was appointed in December 2013.
- The school works in partnership with Broughton High School, a teaching school whose headteacher is a National Leader of Education.
- When it was inspected in October 2013, the academy was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education.

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

- Accelerate further the progress made by boys and disadvantaged students by advancing the academy's strategies to support their learning.
- Further improve the quality of teaching so that increasing proportions of students make exceptional progress by:
  - ensuring that all teachers check students' understanding during lessons so that progress is maximised for the whole class
  - ensuring that all teachers deepen students' thinking through their questions
  - ensuring that errors in students' spelling, punctuation and grammar are addressed so that their literacy skills are developed well in all subjects.
- Raise attainment in technology subjects by ensuring that the actions planned by the new subject leader are rigorously implemented.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's ambition for the academy has been instrumental in securing rapid improvement. She provides unwavering vision and purpose along with a detailed understanding of her staff and students as individuals. She has earned the respect and loyalty of staff, which means that a team ethos pervades Lostock Hall.
- Senior leaders have a good repertoire of complementary skills. Their roles are clearly defined and there is a strong sense of accountability for decisions and outcomes. They make effective use of a wide range of performance data which is shared and understood; this means that all whole-school developments are carefully planned, monitored and evaluated in consistent ways. The academy's systems for collecting, analysing and managing student progress data are being shared with other schools in the local authority as a model of good practice.
- Subject leaders are increasingly skilled. They are passionate about their subjects and areas of responsibility, set high expectations for their teams and evaluate their effectiveness rigorously.
- Pastoral leadership continues to be a significant strength of the academy. The deputy headteacher and her team go to considerable lengths to ensure that students attend well and receive timely support for any difficulties that they may experience.
- Leadership of teaching is robust and multi-faceted. Teachers receive high-quality support to develop their skills, through coaching programmes, research and ongoing lively debate in departments and across the academy about skills and strategies to improve learning. Good practice is continually recognised and celebrated, including through regular teaching and learning bulletins. Partnership working with local schools, including a teaching school, is providing substantial benefits for leaders at all levels. School-to-school support has been instrumental in securing improvement at Lostock Hall, and the relationships established with this and other local schools are set to continue.
- On occasions where teaching has not shown improvement in response to support, senior leaders have taken difficult decisions to ensure that students' learning is paramount. Performance management is robust and teachers' salary progression is closely linked to outcomes for students.
- Leaders demonstrate capacity to secure still further improvement and recognise the importance of succession planning; an 'intern' scheme enables aspirant future leaders to contribute to the academy's direction. A middle leader has been identified to lead the academy's strategy for raising boys' achievement; he meets regularly with senior leaders in order that his ideas can be considered from different perspectives so that a coordinated approach is maintained.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, complemented by an impressive range of extra-curricular activities. A few students spend part of their week off-site studying construction. Their curriculum in school includes a range of academic subjects. Students receive objective, independent information and guidance that helps them to make considered decisions about their future. Virtually every student continues into education, employment or training on leaving the academy.
- Students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is strongly promoted. Students reflect on 'big questions', learn about a variety of faiths, develop tolerant attitudes and have opportunities to engage with moral themes and cultural experiences. A student described how moved she had felt by the academy's act of remembrance. Events such as Holocaust Memorial Day are significant in the academy's calendar. Students actively support a range of charities and contribute to their local community.
- The academy works effectively with parents, including through its parents' forum. Leaders welcome and have acted on parents' feedback including by improving the quality of students' academic reports.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are highly committed to the academy, as shown by the numerous ways in which they actively engage in its work. They undertake learning walks, accompany school trips, meet regularly with a variety of staff and students and attend meetings of the parents' forum. They know the academy well, champion its work in the wider community and continually seek and act upon feedback about how it can improve.
  - Governors lost no time in responding to the outcomes of the previous section 5 inspection. They engaged in a thorough process of self-review, sharpened their practice in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the academy and reconsidered how best to balance the 'support' and 'challenge' dimensions of their work. They now ensure that they receive accurate, timely and comprehensive data; they never shy away from difficult conversations and ensure that their questions are recorded and followed up, including with regard to performance management decisions. Their understanding of the focus and impact of pupil premium and other targeted funding is excellent.

- Governors' knowledge of the work and performance of departments has been enhanced by their individual links with subject leaders. They observe the academy's work first-hand and bring a range of professional and personal skills that enhance leadership and mean that no aspect of the academy's work is overlooked.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties, including with regard to safeguarding.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students are typically friendly, polite and highly positive about the academy. They wear their uniform smartly, present their work neatly and play their part in keeping the school environment tidy. Relationships between students and staff are mutually respectful.
- Students who spoke with inspectors said that behaviour in lessons is typically good. They said that on a few occasions, some students wander off task or take a while to settle but they rarely disrupt other people's learning and that teachers have fair and effective approaches to behaviour management.
- Effective collaboration between students is a feature of their learning. In mathematics, teams of Year 7 students challenged each other to solve algebraic substitutions of increasing difficulty and eagerly supported their team mates by exploring different ways of tackling fractions.
- Good cooperative work was evident across the academy, in situations where groups were determined by teachers as well as those chosen by students.
- Students show respect for one another and challenge discrimination. This was clear in a religious education lesson that focused on the similarities and differences between Judaism, Islam and Christianity and also in students' perceptions of fairness and equality in discussions outside lessons.
- There are very few incidents of poor behaviour that culminate in exclusion. Staff are adept at intervening quickly if they recognise that students are experiencing difficulties, either in school or beyond, that cause changes in their behaviour. Individual support, mentoring and counselling in both behavioural and academic terms are having a positive impact by keeping some students 'on track'. A few students are excluded occasionally from lessons to work under supervision in the inclusion centre. Much work goes into their reintegration so that learning time is not lost.
- The academy's expectations are clearly established in 'The Lostock Hall Way', which students understand and subscribe to. They value the rewards that they can earn, including special trips in recognition of their hard work, good behaviour and achievement. As one student explained: 'We would work hard without the rewards but it's great to be recognised.'
- Students have plenty of opportunities to represent the academy and to support its smooth running. Prefects and school councillors apply for their roles and take them seriously. Reading buddies and mathematics mentors are an integral part of the academy's support system whereby older students help younger ones with aspects of their work.
- Feedback from parents indicates that the vast majority think their children are happy and safe at school and that behaviour is managed well.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students' attendance is high and any absences are swiftly followed up. The attendance of students educated off-site is rigorously checked, as is their behaviour and progress.
- All safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements; these include comprehensive checks on all adults working in school. Child-protection arrangements are strong and the academy is proactive and tenacious in working with partner agencies to ensure that students are kept safe. Students who may be vulnerable, including those looked after by local authorities, have a high priority in the academy's careful monitoring arrangements.
- Students are confident that any bullying is dealt with effectively. Through a strong personal and social education programme, they are given very clear guidance about different types of bullying including homophobic, racist and cyber-bullying. Their awareness of potential risks, such as drink-driving, gang crime and sexual exploitation, is raised in age-appropriate ways including through the involvement of a range of speakers and programmes.
- Students can confidently explain how to stay safe online. Senior prefects have responsibility for monitoring the academy's social media accounts within a controlled environment. Students' knowledge of e-safety is

regularly refreshed through computing lessons and assemblies.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Most teaching enables students to achieve well. Teachers and support staff work hard to meet the needs of their students by providing engaging and varied activities that build sequentially and promote their understanding.
- Teachers make good use of the information available to them about students' prior attainment when they plan lessons. In geography, for example, tasks with different levels of demand were provided to different groups of students and these enabled them to make rapid progress in recognising the features that would influence a community's decision about the acceptability of a renewable power plant.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. In science, students were totally immersed in discovering about light refraction because of the teacher's expertise that was demonstrated through effective questioning of increasing depth. Questioning is generally well-targeted across subjects although, in a few cases, it lacks precision to deepen students' thinking.
- Teachers are keen to try different teaching styles and techniques to accelerate students' learning. A strong programme of professional development has equipped them with a range of approaches, which on most occasions they choose from judiciously according to the aims of their lessons. In a few cases teachers miss opportunities to check on students' progress or understanding before moving on.
- Teachers' marking is of a generally high quality. Students told inspectors that they appreciate the targets that teachers give them in response to key pieces of work. Most students read and act upon their teachers' advice readily and answer the additional questions that teachers pose. Teachers' feedback is of particularly good quality in English. On some occasions, teachers in different subjects do not point out students' errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, including when they are using vocabulary that is important in the subject. This means that errors sometimes persist unnecessarily.
- The academy has a rigorous approach to setting appropriate homework. Students think that the new system whereby teachers record their homework online has helped with their personal organisation. Teachers monitor students' completion of homework carefully and ensure that tasks are meaningful.
- Displays of students' work celebrate learning around the academy. The quality of display is particularly impressive in some English, French and humanities classrooms. In geography, a vibrant display about Japan includes contributions from a wide range of students and is an interesting learning resource for others.
- Teachers are working hard to support students' literacy and numeracy skills including through the 'ready to learn' sessions at the start of the day, which include opportunities for problem solving and private reading.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Students achieve well from their various starting points which are broadly average overall. The evidence from work in students' books and from the academy's assessments of the performance of different year groups indicates that their progress is accelerating swiftly. In 2014, attainment rose and was above the national figure when considering the proportion of students attaining five good GCSE grades including English and mathematics. The proportions of students making and exceeding expected progress in English rose sharply to be above national figures in response to a concerted focus on improving the quality of teaching and assessment. Students' progress in mathematics was similar to that found nationally. Attainment rose to above national levels in a range of subjects including English, mathematics, science subjects, art and design, dance and drama. It was below the national average in some technology subjects where there had been some instability in staffing. The new head of technology is taking carefully considered action to improve teaching and raise achievement.
- The gaps in performance between disadvantaged students and their peers narrowed considerably in 2014, equating to disadvantaged students achieving around half a grade lower than their peers in school in English and mathematics. This represents significant narrowing of gaps since 2013. Disadvantaged students from the academy attained around half a grade lower in 2014 than non-disadvantaged students achieved nationally in 2013 in both subjects. At the time of the inspection the full data set for national achievement in 2014 was not available. The academy's projections based on the progress of students currently on roll indicates an improving trajectory of performance for both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged groups.
- Girls continue to out-perform boys although achievement is rising for students of both genders. The

academy has made a priority of accelerating boys' achievement without detriment to that of girls and there is a strong focus on ensuring that boys are motivated by their work and benefit from interventions in the event of any under-achievement.

- Year 7 catch-up funding has had a very positive impact on the achievement of students entering the academy at below age-related expectations in English and mathematics. The academy's tracking indicates that they make good progress.
- Students with special educational needs attain better than their peers nationally and make good progress in both English and mathematics. Additional programmes boost their progress in spelling and reading that help them to access the wider curriculum.
- Higher-attaining students are making good progress. The work of the most-able students shows that they respond well to teachers' high expectations. Across year groups, students rise to the challenge of teaching that captures their imagination. In a history revision session, Year 11 students tested each other's thinking with considerable maturity while in mathematics they tackled complex problems tenaciously and discussed the skills they would need to demonstrate to be confident in securing A\* grades at GCSE.
- Students who are educated off-site for part of their curriculum complete their vocational courses to a good standard. Some go on to undertake apprenticeships with the company.
- Reading is strongly promoted in the academy through a variety of initiatives; students were keen to be photographed 'caught reading' in unusual places for a celebratory display.
- The academy does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.

## 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>	137111
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	450519

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	679
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Scrivens
<b>Headteacher</b>	Glynis Brimelow
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 October 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 336293
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