

# Churchfields Academy

Salcombe Grove, Swindon, SN3 1ER

**Inspection dates** 21–22 February 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The priorities of school leaders, including the governors, are strongly focused on supporting students' achievement. As a result, students are making good progress and their levels of attainment are rising. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are achieving particularly well.
- The students' good behaviour in lessons helps them to learn well. Around the school, students are courteous and polite. They feel very safe and say that bullying is extremely rare and that if it does occur, it is dealt with effectively by the school.
- Much of the teaching is good and some is outstanding. Relationships between teachers and their students are strong and contribute positively to the quality of learning throughout the school.
- The school has been flexible and responsive in planning a curriculum that meets the needs of all students and this helps the students to enjoy their learning and achieve well. The school promotes the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not all teachers make full use of the information that they have on students' achievement to plan their lessons. This means that the progress of all students is not always as rapid as it could be.
- In a few lessons, teachers do not give students enough opportunities to work together and to learn from each other.
- Some teachers' marking is not sufficiently focused on helping students to improve their work, and students are not always provided with enough opportunities to read, understand and act upon what the teacher has written.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 lessons in addition to making shorter visits to a number of classrooms. Four of these observations were made jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors looked at students' books and discussed samples of their work. They also met with groups of students to discuss their experience of the school and particularly their learning, behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors discussed with a sample of teachers the training and support that they have received and the impact that this has had on their teaching. They observed lessons taught by these teachers.
- Inspectors reviewed a number of documents, including: the minutes of governors' meetings; safeguarding procedures; behaviour and attendance records; documents relating to school self-review and improvement; and school records on performance management and teaching and learning, including lesson observations.
- Inspectors met with three members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and groups of school leaders. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of the 23 responses to the Parent View survey, and 22 questionnaires completed by members of staff.

## Inspection team

Graham Tuck, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Anne Barrett	Additional inspector
Helen Blanchard	Additional inspector
Shahnaz Maqsoos	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller than average-size secondary school.
- The school converted to an academy in September 2011. It has a specialism in mathematics, computing and science.
- About three fifths of students are of White British heritage. Approximately one in four are Asian or Asian British.
- About a third of students speak English as an additional language, which is more than double the national average.
- Approximately 40% of students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional money allocated to schools by the government). This proportion is well above the national average.
- About one in five of students who are disabled or have special educational needs are supported through school action, and a little over one in ten are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. These proportions are above the national average.
- In December, 2012, the school opened The Grove Learning Centre which provides additional classes for students aged 11 to 16 who are finding aspects of school life difficult. It also provides additional support for parents and carers.
- A small number of students attend courses at local colleges of education, or part time at another school which provides specialist support for potentially vulnerable students.
- A nursery operates on the school site. This is not managed by the school's governing body and will be inspected separately.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Churchfields Academy converted to become an academy school on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2011. When its predecessor school, Churchfields School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.

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

- Ensure that teachers consistently use achievement data to plan their lessons so that they can more effectively support the progress of all students.
- Improve teachers' marking, to ensure that:
  - it is clearly focused on what students need to do to improve
  - more opportunities are provided for students to act upon their teachers' comments, to help them to learn more effectively.
- Provide further opportunities for students to work together in class and to learn from each other.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Although students join the school with levels of attainment that are well below national figures, they make good progress and, as a result, the percentage of students gaining at least five grade A\* to C passes including English and mathematics has risen substantially in recent years, and this year was similar to the national average. The school's reliable information on the performance of its current Year 11 students shows that their attainment is set to rise still further.
- Last year, a large percentage of students took their GCSE mathematics examination at the start of their final year, with the opportunity to resit the examination in the summer. The school uses this system to help motivate its students and care is taken to ensure that students do not drop the subject until they achieve the grade that is expected of them. A few students took an additional qualification in advanced mathematics, which has helped to support them in their college courses. Overall, students make strong progress in mathematics and this has resulted in a high proportion achieving A\* to C grades.
- The average points scores in English and mathematics for students who are supported by the pupil premium are below those for all students nationally. However, these students are making rapid and sustained progress and, as a result, the gap between their attainment and that of other students is narrowing rapidly. The effective targeting of pupil premium money, for example in providing extra classes to help eligible students to improve their reading and writing skills, has played an important part in this success.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs in both the main school and the specialist resource centre receive very good additional adult support in class and, as a result, make good progress. Where they are taught in small groups, their progress is also strong. For example, in one Year 8 history group, all four students were fully engaged and were able to talk convincingly about the progress that they were making.
- Ably supported by three specialist teaching assistants, students who speak English as an additional language make particularly strong progress throughout the school. The progress of Asian and Asian British students is very good and as a result they attain above national averages.
- Students are encouraged to read widely, for example through the creation of a school reading group. At breaks and lunchtimes, the library is a busy place with a number of students engaged in personal reading or reading with others.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The relationship between teachers and students is a strong feature of the school and helps to ensure that there is a good climate for learning. As one Year 11 student said, 'Lessons are fun and we all make good progress here.'
- When given the opportunity, students work well together and benefit from being able to discuss their ideas and give feedback on each other's work. This shows their good moral and social development. For example, in a Year 11 music lesson, students enthusiastically discussed technical terms before being required to apply these to a number of tough questions set under examination conditions. However, in some lessons teachers do not provide such opportunities and on these occasions students are not always able to develop or consolidate their thinking sufficiently.
- Teachers' questioning is often used effectively to clarify students' understanding; for example, in a Year 7 physical education (PE) lesson skilful questioning was used to enable students to explore in depth why the heart beats faster when a person exercises.
- In many lessons, teachers make good use of their knowledge of the students' different interests and abilities to plan their lessons effectively. This knowledge is supplemented by very good school systems for sharing student achievement data. In these lessons, students make good and

sometimes outstanding progress. However, in a few lessons, planning is less effective and as a result there is insufficient stretch and challenge. Teachers are generally thorough in providing students with written support and encouragement in their marking of students' work. However, not all of their comments are sufficiently focused on what students need to do to improve, and teachers do not always give students sufficient opportunities to reflect on their teacher's feedback and to act upon the advice they have been given.

- Teachers carefully plan how they are going to use other adults in the classroom, and ensure that they are fully involved in lessons. As a result, the students who receive this additional support make good progress.

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

- The behaviour of students in lessons is rarely less than good and sometimes it is outstanding. When asked to work together, students do so enthusiastically and they take pride in each other's achievements. For example, in a Year 9 dance lesson, students were appreciative of each other's performances and, as a result, were encouraged to produce work of the highest quality. Where student behaviour needs to improve, it is because the teaching is less effective and activities are not so well chosen.
- The atmosphere in school is calm and friendly. Students confirm that they feel safe and that if bullying does take place, it is dealt with very effectively by their teachers. Students have a good understanding of potential hazards such as drugs and alcohol abuse and cyber-bullying. Racist incidents are very rare and are carefully monitored by the school, and any concerns are followed up and dealt with successfully.
- As part of its commitment to the well-being of all of its students, the school operates a specialist centre that provides additional classes for those students who find aspects of school life difficult. This centre successfully uses the expertise of outside professionals to provide students with support in such areas as stress and anxiety, temper control and school attendance.
- Few of the parents and carers who responded to Parent View expressed concerns about student behaviour and almost all felt that their child was safe in school. Staff noted marked improvements in behaviour over time and an overwhelming majority felt that behaviour was now a strong feature of the school.
- The school has effective systems for promoting good attendance, and students arrive at their lessons on time and ready to learn.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Leaders have successfully focused on raising levels of attainment in the school and as a result achievement is good. A particular strength is the school's well-developed system for monitoring the progress of individuals, where gaps in learning can be spotted quickly and difficulties addressed. Students who are potentially vulnerable are well supported through this process and the vast majority of students leave school to move on to further education, training or employment.
- Leaders regularly monitor the quality of lessons and this provides them with information both on strengths and areas that need to improve. As a result, additional training for teachers is well tailored to their needs and this has helped to bring about improvements in the overall quality of teaching. However, school leaders recognise the need to completely eliminate weak practice. Payment scales are used effectively to recruit, reward and retain good teachers.
- School leaders have been imaginative in their development of a curriculum that is well matched to the students' needs and abilities. Three routes to qualifications are offered in the upper school and these give students the opportunity to access a rich mix of academic and vocational courses. More-able students benefit from being able to take some additional GCSEs in one year. This

allows them to experience a wide range of subjects and ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education or training.

- A few older students benefit from additional classes held at local colleges in subjects such as electronics and childcare. A small number who find the challenges of a mainstream school difficult attend, part time, a school that specialises in giving them support and preparing them for the next stage of their education or training. The academy has good systems in place for monitoring the progress and well-being of these students.
  - A wide range of clubs and activities helps contribute to students' spiritual and cultural development. A student council plays an active part in school life and students have good opportunities to discuss their concerns and ideas for change, to which the school pays heed.
  - The school is a harmonious community and leaders show a strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities and to tackling the very rare incidents of racist behaviour.
  - Of the small number of parents and carers that responded to Parent View, not all agreed that the school keeps them well informed of their child's progress. Nevertheless, inspectors found that the school does ensure that the school provides parents and carers with regular and informative progress reports.
  - The local authority provides the school with effective, light touch support.
  - Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and meet requirements.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors make a strong contribution to the leadership of the school. Through their committees and regular visits they have developed a good understanding of the day-to-day work of the school, the quality of its teaching and what needs to be done to improve.
    - There is a strong commitment to developing their skills through training and this is helping them to become even more effective. For example, their attendance at a recent course on achievement data has meant that they are now more proficient in using information to assess how well the school is doing compared with other similar schools.
    - Governors oversee performance management processes closely and ensure that any pay rewards are linked to good teaching.
    - Governors have a clear overview of school finances, and receive regular reports which enable them to understand how pupil premium spending is helping to raise levels of achievement for disadvantaged students, for example through the employment of additional teachers.
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## 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>	137408
<b>Local authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	406671

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	891
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Gregory
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Flavin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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