

Stamford Queen Eleanor School

Green Lane, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 1HE

Inspection dates 12–13 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement varies between subjects and has not yet reached the stage where it is consistently good.
- In the 2012 examinations, students did not make good progress in mathematics or science from their starting points in Year 7.
- The quality of teaching, while improving strongly, varies between subjects, so is not good overall.
- Generally, there is not enough challenge for higher ability students, although this varies between subjects.
- Teachers' marking varies in quality. Pupils are not given enough information on what they should do to improve their work.

The school has the following strengths

- Students make outstanding progress in English.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress overall and outstanding progress in English.
- The quality of the checks made by academy leaders are very rigorous and are helping to improve the quality of teaching rapidly.
- There are early signs of much improved progress in mathematics as a result of better teaching.
- Students' behaviour and their safety are good. They are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. Students feel safe and secure in the academy
- The academy is well led. The headteacher has a very accurate view of the academy's strengths and areas for development. The improvements she has made since the academy opened have been impressive.
- High-quality governance ensures that academy leaders are held very closely to account.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons or part lessons of which three were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, the inspection team made visits to small group lessons for special educational needs pupils.
- Meetings were held with groups of staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the academy trust, the CfBT Trust.
- Inspectors took account of the 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including academy improvement plans, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Robert Jones, Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Christine Murrell	Additional Inspector
Chris Fallon	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized secondary academy.
- Most pupils are White British.
- An average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for those pupils in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and supported through school action is average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- At the time of the inspection, three students were receiving off-site education on a full-time basis from the provider 'The Pilgrim Hospital'.
- Stamford Queen Eleanor School converted to become an academy in November 2011. When its predecessor school, Stamford Queen Eleanor School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory. The academy is part of the CfBT Schools Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and further improve the quality of teaching, particularly in science and mathematics, so they become at least good by:
 - setting harder work for higher ability students
 - ensuring that teachers use the good assessment information they have to ask challenging questions to students that match their abilities.
- Improve the quality of feedback that is given to students by:
 - ensuring that teachers' marking always gives students very precise information on the steps they need to take to improve their work
 - giving students the opportunity to read, reflect and act on the advice that they are given.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In the 2012 GCSE examinations, students made slow progress in mathematics and science. This was a result of weak mathematics skills they had acquired before the academy opened and when these students were younger.
- While mathematics skills remain weak for some students, the academy's most recent data and examination results indicate that students are making much better progress in mathematics as a result of improved teaching and better emphasis on tracking students' progress over time.
- Early entry for mathematics GCSE adversely affected the final results of students in 2012. While early entries have been made for the current Year 11, mathematics teachers are now analysing the results more carefully and using them to target more precisely weaknesses in students' knowledge and understanding.
- In science, weak teaching over time has not given students the skills, knowledge or understanding to succeed in examinations. While this is now improving, the projections for 2013 indicate that students are likely to have made below-average progress.
- In English, all groups of students make consistently outstanding progress as a result of some outstanding teaching and the high-quality use of data to make sure that students' needs are precisely met.
- Pupil premium funding is used well by the academy to narrow the gaps in achievement between groups of students. A special computer based course is used in science, but it is still too early to measure the impact of this. Special courses designed to boost students' reading abilities are effective. In 2012, students known to be eligible for free school meals were the equivalent of more than two years behind their classmates in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 4. However, these gaps are closing rapidly.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used to fund a summer school and to provide resources to boost students' reading abilities. This is having a positive effect on students' literacy skills.
- Those who are educated off-site make similar progress to their peers and have their literacy needs well met.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress, and in English they make outstanding progress. This is because they receive good support from well-trained teaching assistants, often in small groups or on a one-to-one basis.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- While improving strongly, the quality of teaching remains inconsistent between subjects. Therefore, while there are examples of outstanding teaching in the academy, these inconsistencies mean that teaching overall requires improvement.
- Where teaching is weaker, there is a lack of challenge for higher ability students who sometimes have to spend time doing simple work before they have a chance to tackle work more suited to their abilities.

- Teachers have detailed information on what students know and can do but they do not always use this information to make sure that they vary the complexity of their questions depending on the ability of the students.
- The quality of feedback that students receive is inconsistent. Sometimes, students' work is not marked, consists of simple congratulatory comments or is just ticked. This does not help to give students the information they need to improve their work.
- On the occasions students are given good-quality comments on their work, there is rarely the opportunity for students to read, reflect and act on the advice that they are given.
- Where teaching is good or outstanding, students are fully involved in working in groups or taking part in discussions. They assess each other's work against checklists provided by teachers, who constantly challenge students to do their best.
- In one such lesson, students used tablet computers to film each other's movements in gymnastics. They then used the film clips to offer advice to each other, with the teacher constantly encouraging their use of proper terminology.
- English teaching is strong because teachers use excellent questioning techniques. Moreover, they spend time talking to each student about their work, which makes their verbal feedback very personal to each student. In English, the quality of feedback to students is better and more consistent than it is in other subjects, and the impact of this is very evident in the notably better progress that students make in this subject.
- Teaching assistants generally give good support to students in lessons and where they teach small groups. For example, they teach well in, premium funded reading classes. This enables eligible students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs to make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' good behaviour is reflected in their pride in the school and their above-average attendance.
- In lessons, students are keen to co-operate with teachers and behave very well in situations that require them to work in groups. Even in lessons where they are not fully challenged, students are very patient and well behaved.
- Inspectors were impressed with students' very good manners and how helpful they were when inspectors got lost in the academy.
- Students say that instances of bullying and harassment are rare but that, when they do happen, they are quickly dealt with.
- Students have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using computers and mobile phones. They are well aware of the importance of security settings and are very clear what they should do if they receive any inappropriate text messages on their phones.
- Students behave well around the academy during lunchtimes, break times and between classes.

Only occasionally, when not supervised does their behaviour become a little boisterous.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the senior team with vision and energy. Staff are highly supportive of the increased rigour with which teaching is checked and how this is leading to rapid improvements.
- Improvements are most obvious in subjects such as history, where results in the 2012 GCSE examinations were among the lowest in the academy. Rigorous checking of the quality of teaching and high-quality tracking of students' progress has now paid dividends with history results in the coming year on track to be significantly higher.
- Similarly, in mathematics, improvements in how work is matched to students' abilities and improved leadership are leading to rapid improvements.
- Underpinning these improvements is a first-rate system of quality checking, through which all senior and subject leaders are held closely to account.
- This quality checking has ensured that leaders and governors are well aware of the remaining areas of weakness and how they should be tackled.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, meeting students' needs well. Opportunities for students to take part in wheelchair basketball and links with a school in Corsica help to broaden students' horizons and develops their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- The curriculum for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is of high quality. Students who need extra support are identified quickly and a package of measures ensures that they make at least good progress.
- Off-site education provided by the Pilgrim Hospital is checked rigorously by academy leaders to make sure that it closely meets students' needs and that they are kept safe throughout their training.
- Teachers' performance is managed rigorously and this has been instrumental in bringing about rapid improvements. All teachers have challenging targets that are linked to improving the quality of their teaching and any underperformance is tackled decisively by academy leaders.
- The academy fully meets all current safeguarding requirements.
- The academy sponsor supports the academy well, for example by providing training courses for modern foreign language teachers to improve their teaching of a key part of the GCSE course.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body gives excellent support and provides significant challenge for academy leaders. Its members bring with them valuable expertise, for example in helping the academy to improve its use of sustainable energy. They have an impressive understanding of achievement and how well students are achieving in comparison with similar schools. They have acquired this understanding through high-quality training provided by the academy. Similarly, they check on the management of teachers' performance to ensure that there is a clear link between the quality of teaching and teachers' progression on the pay scale. The governing body keeps a close eye on how the pupil premium is being used but have yet to

evaluate whether this spending is providing good value for money.

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	120657
Local authority	Not Applicable
Inspection number	402763

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	458
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Selwyn
Headteacher	Wendy Hamilton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01780 751011
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