

The Westwood Academy

Mitchell Avenue, Canley, Coventry, CV4 8DY

Inspection dates 13–14 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers provide lively and exciting tasks that enable students to build their learning step by step.
- Students' behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school, and they feel very safe. They are polite and welcoming, and keen to talk positively about their school.
- The headteacher, senior team and governing body take a strong lead in driving improvement. Rigorous checks on teaching, followed up with good training and support where they are needed, maintain the high quality of classroom practice.
- Students' achievement is good. Their attainment is well below average when they start in Year 7, but they make good progress and leave with attainment that is broadly in line with national averages.
- The range of subjects and courses students study are well matched to their individual needs.
- The sixth form is good. The progress students make is good and improving rapidly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of written marking is inconsistent, and too few opportunities are provided for students to respond to the advice given.
- Some students do not come to school as often as they should. This hinders their progress.
- Occasionally, teaching is not fully effective when tasks are not at the right level of difficulty to match individual students' needs.
- Leaders have not done enough to share the good and outstanding practice in marking and lesson planning that exists in the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons, five of which were jointly observed with one of the school’s senior leaders. Inspectors also listened to several pupils read and looked at samples of recent work.
- Meetings were held with students, the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, heads of subject departments, teachers, governors, and by telephone with the School Improvement Partner.
- Inspectors reviewed a variety of documents, including the school’s own analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, the school development plans, behaviour records, governing body documents, and documents relating to the management of teachers’ performance.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in 54 questionnaires returned by school staff, along with the 14 responses submitted by parents to the online Parent View survey and letters from parents.

Inspection team

Steven Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David King

Additional Inspector

Wendy Davies

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school converted to become an academy on the 1 August 2011. When the predecessor school, The Westwood School – a Technology College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- Most students are of White British heritage and most speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which in this school provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Alternative provision at Arthur Rank, City College, Moor Farm, CWT and Motovate offers a small number of students additional support and education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or outstanding by ensuring that teachers:
 - routinely give students the opportunity to respond to marking and advice on how to improve their work by attempting a new challenge or practising skills
 - consistently plan work at the right level to match individual students' different needs and abilities
 - sharing the good and outstanding practice in marking and lesson planning that is already in the school.
- Work closely with parents and carers to improve attendance rates so they are consistently at least in line with national averages.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students typically start at the school with attainment well below national averages. They make good progress and their attainment, including the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics, is broadly average by the time they leave.
- Lesson observations during the inspection showed that students are extremely well motivated and keen to do well. In a physical education lesson in Year 7, this meant that students were able to demonstrate their ability to use new ball skills of throwing and catching, and then extend their learning by observing and then offering advice to their classmates on how to improve their skills.
- Well-established strategies help accelerate reading. Catch-up courses are provided for the weakest readers, establishing a systematic approach and providing effective individual support throughout Key Stage 3. These result in these students making good progress.
- The school enters students early for GCSE examinations in mathematics, with an option to resit them in Year 11, in order for them to gain the best possible grades. This has been successful for the present Year 11, 53% of whom have already gained a grade C or above. The school is ensuring that, in mathematics, all students have the opportunity to improve their results further by offering extra tuition and homework clubs.
- The 2012, GCSE results showed that boys had achieved better than girls. Leaders looked carefully into the reasons for this, and responded well by providing additional classes and individual tuition in English and mathematics, and introducing rigorous strategies to promote better attendance. These strategies have been aimed at specific groups and not just girls, but one clear result has been that boys and girls are now making equally good progress.
- The school is making very good use of its pupil premium funding. Extra staffing, 'Time4You' tuition and funding for additional educational resources, for example, are helping students to make good and sustained progress. As a result, the attainment gap was less than one GCSE grade in English and mathematics between these students and their classmates in 2012, and this gap is now closing very quickly.
- The school tracks the performance of students supported through the Year 7 'catch-up' premium carefully to ensure they are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other students because staff have identified students' individual needs and arranged the right additional help. Teachers and teaching assistants support students, providing challenge and encouragement and helping them with subject-specific vocabulary.
- The small number of students who attend other institutions as part of their education are gaining appropriate qualifications and making good progress.
- Students make good progress in the school's small and well-established sixth form. A-level results in 2012 dipped to below national averages. Leaders have rigorously addressed this underperformance. The school's accurate assessments of how well students are doing show that they are achieving well, from below-average starting points, and are on track to reach national averages by the end of their courses.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to motivate their students. They provide a range of tasks that encourage students to want to succeed. This was particularly noticeable in a geography lesson, where students in Year 10 had the opportunity to practise interpreting data skills concerning the growing world population. The students were given more and more complex information and were able, through class discussion, to show a clear understanding of what strategies to use to develop their work to reach the highest level possible.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers use questioning well to check students' understanding, asking searching questions and encouraging discussion. For example, in a religious education lesson where teaching was good, students worked cooperatively in groups to develop their understanding of what makes humans unique. They clearly enjoyed the task and responded positively to the teacher's probing questions.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers ensure that students understand key subject ideas in the level of depth that will enable them to achieve good grades. Students take responsibility for monitoring their own progress and often collaborate well in helping each other to achieve the lesson aims.
- The vast majority of teaching observed during the inspection was good or better. Records of leaders' rigorous checking show that this is typically the case. However, there is some variation, both within and across subjects, and a small amount of teaching requires improvement. As a result, some students' achievement is not consistently good.
- In lessons where teaching requires improvement, this is usually because of relative weaknesses in teachers' planning. Activities are not always matched sufficiently closely to students' individual abilities. As a result, some less-able students become distracted because they do not know what to do, and more-able students are sometimes expected to undertake tasks that are too easy for them before moving on to more challenging work.
- Although teachers often provide clear feedback for students during lessons on how well they are doing, not all provide clear written feedback on how students can improve their work and reach their targets. Opportunities are being missed across most subjects to enable students to respond to advice by practising skills, correcting mistakes or being set an additional challenge.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are keen to learn in almost every lesson. Their behaviour during lessons is almost always good and this has a positive impact on their learning.
- Students told inspectors that they feel very safe and well cared for. They say bullying is very rare but, if there are any incidents, they are dealt with quickly and effectively. Students are aware of the different types of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying and cyber-bullying, and know what to do if it occurs.
- Students conduct themselves well. They are polite and courteous to visitors. They willingly talk to adults and are honest about their feelings about the school. The school promotes positive relationships between students, and they get on well together.
- Sixth form students receive good information, support and guidance. They make an excellent contribution to the life of the school; for example, through working with nurture groups in the

lower school.

- Attendance over the last three years has remained below national averages. The school has worked hard to improve this situation and has introduced measures to focus on the importance of attending school every day. Persistence absence rates have fallen in response, and attendance was broadly average at the time of the inspection. However, leaders are aware that the improvements are fragile and are rightly planning to do more work to encourage regular attendance, support families who struggle to get their children to school, and to make clear the effect that absence has on their children's progress and attainment.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is supported well by the senior team and the governing body. He has established rigorous procedures to check the quality of teaching and provide support for any staff identified as underperforming.
- Students' progress is checked regularly and underachievement is identified and tackled. Leaders are aware of the school's strengths and areas for development, and appropriate priorities for action have been identified. The school's systems for monitoring and assessing its strengths and weaknesses are very well focused and accurately identify its priorities for improvement.
- Leaders have not done enough to share the best practice in marking and lesson planning. As a result, some students are not achieving the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Procedures for managing staff performance are well established. They link salary increases to the quality of teaching and pupil achievement, as teachers are held closely to account for the progress made by their students.
- The school's leaders ensure that the funding from the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up programme is appropriately focused on providing support for eligible students, and check that it is being used effectively.
- The school provides extensive consultation and support for the parents of disabled students, those who have special educational needs, and other students who may need support. This ensures that they are fully included in school life and that all have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- The leadership of the sixth form is good. The school has rigorously addressed the dip in results in 2012. It has introduced dedicated 'mentors' who are closely tracking individual students' progress, and is developing an 'alternative pathways' curriculum to attract the interest of more-able students in Year 11. Current indications are that sixth form students are on track to improve their results in 2013.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported through an excellent range of opportunities. For example, the school is the first non-church secondary school in the country to have become an 'ICON' school, having been awarded a 'Cross of Nails' by Coventry Cathedral in recognition of its work on peace and reconciliation, both locally and internationally.
- The school uses the external support it needs very effectively. For example, the school improvement adviser, an independent consultant, has provided well-targeted support for the school's leaders.

- The Parent View responses indicate that parents have positive views about the school, with a large majority saying they would recommend the school to another parent.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is well informed. It challenges and supports the school and compares its performance with similar schools nationally. Governors have a deep insight into the quality of teaching. They ensure that the use of additional funds from the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up improves the achievement of the students for whom the funds are intended. The governing body oversees the management of finance and resources expertly and ensures that staff pay rises and promotion are justified. Governors rigorously check safeguarding practice and, as a result, safeguarding procedures meet current legal requirements.

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	137225
Local authority	NA
Inspection number	412837

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	596
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Harris
Headteacher	Roger Whittall
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	024 7646 7779
Fax number	024 7646 7321
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