

The Littlehampton Academy

Fitzalan Road, Littlehampton, BN17 6FE

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- The school has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection.
- Most students, including the most able, those of average ability and those supported by the pupil premium, make inadequate progress.
- Students' English and mathematical skills are weak. Their written work is often poorly presented.
- Teaching is inadequate. Teachers' assessments of students' progress are not accurate enough for them to set work appropriate to students' abilities.
- Teachers' marking does not always tell students how well they are doing or how to improve.
- Teachers do not ensure that students fully understand what they are learning and as a consequence they do not always complete work correctly.
- The Principal has not given strong enough direction for the academy or ensured it has improved students' progress or the quality of teaching sufficiently.
- Leaders' evaluations of teaching do not focus enough on how well students learn, and what is needed to make teaching better. Not all leaders are well enough trained to help drive improvements in their subjects.
- Parents do not have confidence that the academy is providing a good education for their children.
- The academy council does not provide enough challenge for the Principal and staff.

The school has the following strengths

- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress and teachers provide them with a high level of support and guidance.
- Students who are autistic make good progress.
- Students' attendance and behaviour have improved considerably in the last year.
- The academy provides good care for its students and ensures they are safe.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 47 teachers in 47 parts of lessons. Six of these observations were shared with senior leaders to determine how accurately they evaluate teaching.
- Meetings were held with staff, students, parents and members of the academy council. The lead inspector also spoke with a trustee and the academies chief officer from the Woodard Academy Trust.
- Inspectors examined documents about the academy’s work, including information about the achievement of students, development planning and the academy’s own judgements on its strengths and weaknesses.
- Inspectors took account of 78 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, and the academy’s own survey of parents’ views. It also considered the responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Edward Wheatley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mehar Brar	Additional Inspector
Marion Lewis	Additional Inspector
Roger Garrett	Additional Inspector
Andrew Blow	Additional Inspector
Genevieve Usher	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- The academy is larger than most secondary schools.
- The majority of students are from a White British heritage.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below average, and a very small number are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the school premium is broadly average. This is additional government funding for certain groups of students, including students looked after by the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals, or from a family with a parent in the armed services.
- A small number of students are partly educated offsite at Chichester and Brinsbury Colleges.
- The academy funds and manages specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs. This is in the form of a 12 place Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) unit which currently has 11 students.
- The Littlehampton Academy is a Christian-designated academy sponsored by the Woodard Academies Trust (WAT). It opened in September 2009, and moved into the mainly new buildings in September 2012.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in order to raise achievement by ensuring teachers:
 - accurately assess students' progress and plan work that reflects their previous progress and attainment
 - provide challenging work for all students, especially the more-able, those of middle ability and those supported through pupil premium funds
 - improve students' basic skills in literacy and numeracy, by providing frequent opportunities to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects
 - insist that students take greater care with the presentation of their work so that they can refer to it when they revise for examinations
- Ensure that senior leaders, and in particular the Principal:
 - provide clear direction for the academy's work by concentrating on how to bring about rapid improvements in teaching and achievement
 - accurately evaluate the quality of teaching by focusing on how well students learn so that feedback and training for teachers are clearly directed at improving the progress made by

students

- make arrangements for all subject leaders to receive training to help them develop effective teaching in their subjects
- work closely with parents to address their concerns about the quality of education provide for their children.

- Improve the effectiveness of the academy council by making sure members understand how to discharge their responsibilities for holding the Principal and other key staff to account for the academy's performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved. In addition, an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- The progress made by students is well below expectations and achievement is therefore inadequate. GCSE results have remained significantly below average over the last three years. There was some improvement in progress in modern languages in 2013 but, in other subjects, progress has been weak, particularly in English and mathematics. There are early signs of improving progress in most subjects, but this is at a very early stage.
- Most groups of students make too little progress. While there are examples of good progress in some classes, this is not sustained throughout all subjects. Too many inconsistencies between subjects remain and standards are rising too slowly to provide a secure foundation for sustained improvement.
- Students supported by the pupil premium funding are not making enough progress to close the gap between them and their classmates. The gap has varied from year to year, but it remains too wide in both English and mathematics by the time students leave school. Nevertheless, the progress made by students supported through pupil premium funds is better than it was in the past. Funds are used most effectively in Years 7, 8 and 9 to provide one-to-one support, reading and writing programmes, and to ensure students have the same opportunities for trips and activities as other students. As a result, for eligible students in Years 7, 8 and 9, the gap is beginning to close. Funds are not used effectively in Years 10 and 11.
- Students' literacy skills are inadequate. While some students write well, using accurate terminology and produce detailed, well-presented written work, many do not. Often their work is untidy and not detailed enough to be useful for students to refer to when they are revising for examinations.
- Most students read competently. Those who struggle with reading, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9 are well supported, and their reading is improving. In Years 10 and 11, reading is improving, but more slowly because these students did not receive support soon enough to make sure their reading improved quickly.
- Students' mathematical skills are well below average. In some lessons, students use mathematical procedures they have been taught effectively, and they complete calculations accurately. However, basic skills are not consistently well learned or practised in mathematics lessons or those subjects that require good mathematical knowledge.
- The small number of students who are at the early stages of English make inadequate progress over time, even though the school ensures that they develop their language skills sufficiently to join in with other students in lessons.
- With the exception of the small number of autistic students from the resourced provision, the progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs requires improvement. Better teaching and a clear focus on the needs of these students throughout the school is ensuring they make improved progress. Teachers and support staff now work well with these students to help them become confident learners. Among these students are some with particular social and emotional problems who receive sensitive and effective support. They make good progress in overcoming their social and emotional difficulties.
- Students starting in Year 7 with below-average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics progress well. The Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to provide reading, writing and

mathematics programmes and one-to-one support to make sure students can quickly join in learning with other students.

- The small number of students from the resource provision for autistic students make good progress. They learn to work well with other students and make good progress from their academic starting points. These students are also well integrated into mainstream lessons, which they attend for most of their time, because they receive effective support from specialist staff, and work in lessons is well planned for their particular needs.
- The few students who undertake vocational offsite courses make good progress. For example, students taking construction or hair and beauty courses did well. This was because they find the courses interesting. They are well prepared for work when they leave school.
- Students in the sixth form achieve well. Students reached average standards in the 2013 examinations. This represented good progress from students' below average starting points. The retention rate from AS to A level has increased from year to year recently. Students taking applied AS- and A-level courses did well in their examinations. Despite occasional careless presentation of their work, the majority of sixth form students have good study skills.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Teaching is not good enough in a range of subjects. The good teaching that does exist has not been sustained over a long enough period of time. There is not enough of it and so it has not had enough impact on students' attainment and progress.
- In many lessons, work is not challenging enough. Students, and particularly the more able, make less progress than they should because they are set work that is too easy for them.
- Teachers do not make sure that students always write in sufficient detail or present their work neatly to be useful for revision purposes. Similarly, they do not reinforce students' mathematical skills and there is no academy-wide approach to help them do this.
- Teaching assistants and teachers work effectively together to plan work which supports disabled students and those who have special educational needs. This helps students to maintain positive attitudes to their learning and, more recently, to make better progress than in the past.
- The teaching of the students based in the ASD unit is good. Thorough, detailed planning between teachers and specialist unit staff ensure that these students make fast progress in a secure, friendly environment.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers challenge students to make sure they explain their understanding and knowledge well. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They provide good opportunities for students to develop confidence in their own abilities and provide a high level of support and guidance for them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Students' attention wanders when work is undemanding or not interesting. This happens in a significant minority of lessons.
- Students are not given sufficient opportunity to take on responsibilities, for example to help

younger students or to support charity collections. Year 11 students, in particular, said they would like to contribute more to the academy's life.

- Despite their significant underachievement, students' attitudes to learning are generally positive. They respond well in lessons where teaching is challenging and teachers' expectations are high. In these lessons they have high aspirations, show a thirst for knowledge, are enthusiastic and work extremely hard. Even in the least challenging lessons, where some students lose interest and their attention wanders, they do not often distract each other from learning.
- There have been significant improvements in behaviour. Exclusions have fallen considerably. The academy's efforts to set high expectations of how students behave are generally successful, and especially so where teaching is good. While some parents and staff report that some students behave badly, inspectors saw very little disruptive behaviour. Students also said that unacceptable behaviour was rare. Around the building and grounds, students' behaviour is good.
- Students' attendance is broadly average, and has improved in recent years. Persistent absence has fallen because staff have established effective relationships with families of students who are often absent, and the academy makes good use of external agencies to encourage regular attendance.
- Students have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying. They say bullying is rare and that incidents have reduced. They say this is partly because the new buildings make it easier for staff and other students to readily see any form of unacceptable behaviour. They are confident that bullying is dealt with well.
- Students behave safely around the buildings. In practical work and physical activities they are careful and considerate towards each other.
- Sixth form students enjoy their time at the academy. They have positive attitudes to work and take active roles in the life of the academy. For example, they run clubs for Years 7 and 8 students and help with productions, such as the forthcoming *Bugsy Malone*. Their attendance is good and they have high expectations for their own success.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate. Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers'
- The Principal does not convey a clear sense of the need for urgent action to reverse the pattern of significant underachievement. Staff at different levels of responsibility lack confidence in the Principal's ability to drive improvement and say their efforts are not valued. The school's capacity for further improvement is inadequate.
- Not enough has been done to eliminate inadequate teaching. In evaluating teaching, leaders do not pay enough attention to how teaching impacts on learning. While some teachers and departments evaluate teaching accurately, actions to support their work to improve teaching are not strong enough.
- The new assessment programme designed to help teachers track progress and plan suitable work for students has yet to impact positively on students' learning and progress.
- Teachers have been set targets that link students' progress to their movement up the salary

scales. However, teachers do not receive sufficient support from the Principal and senior leaders to help them achieve these targets.

- The management of provision for disabled students, those with special educational needs and for those who are vulnerable because of social and emotional reasons is good; recent improvements are leading to students making better progress. However, where students are subject to child protection issues, the workload for senior staff managing this is too much, and does not always ensure that support for students and review of their progress can be carried out properly.
- Training for heads of department and other leaders requires improvement. Some heads of department have had good training from the Woodard Academies Trust, but others have not yet received the same level of support.
- Parents express justified worries about the academy, particularly in regard to how well students make progress, the quality of teaching and about how well the academy is led. The academy's own survey of parental views shows similar concerns. The academy has not dealt with these concerns or raised parents' confidence.
- The curriculum is slowly being changed so that it more effectively supports students' needs and interests. For example, it has established links with universities to help raise students' aspirations, has implemented a programme to improve students' behaviour and has reduced class sizes in several subjects to help provide increased individual support for students. These initiatives are at an early stage and their impact is not yet clear.
- The academy provides a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. These include arts, drama, revision classes, sports, and residential trips. These enhance students' experiences and help encourage an interest in cultural life beyond the academy. Assemblies add a spiritual element to students' experiences and help promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare them for later life.
- The implementation of offsite provision is helping to engage students in their learning and reduce the levels of absence. The academy checks offsite provision is of a good quality.
- The academy has established effective approaches to managing students' behaviour. These are well understood by students, and teachers apply them consistently. As a result, students' behaviour has improved.
- The academy looks after its students well, and senior leaders have established good links with feeder primary schools to ensure students arriving in Year 7 settle in quickly.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The sixth form programme of study is tailored well to students' interests and abilities. Leaders are effective in ensuring there is good provision and effective academic guidance for students. Leaders have a good understanding of students' needs and students appreciate the help they receive.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - At the local level, the academy council has only recently become aware of how students perform in relation to other students nationally and that their achievement is inadequate. It does not challenge or hold the Principal and staff to account for students' underachievement. While the level of challenge is improving, the response has been too slow to help drive up standards and the rate of progress made by students. The council does not have an accurate

view of staff concerns. Nevertheless, the council supports the academy, and is striving to improve its own skills through training.

- The Woodard Academies Trust ensures safeguarding requirements are met, that there are secure systems to check new staff, and that the academy carries out the performance management of teachers. The Trust recognises where the academy has weaknesses. It knows about the differences in performance between subjects and different groups of students and is taking action to promote better leadership, teaching and achievement. It checks on how well pupil premium funds are spent.

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	135745
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	426549

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1708
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	279
Appropriate authority	The Woodard Academies Trust
Chair	Jan Richardson
Principal	Steve Jewell
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2011
Telephone number	01903 711120
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Email address	office@tla.woodard.co.uk

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