

The New Forest Academy

Long Lane, Holbury, Southampton, Hampshire, SO45 2PA

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Inadequate 4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate 4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate 4
Leadership and management		Inadequate 4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Students' progress was inadequate in the academy's first year. The students underachieved in many subjects, including English and mathematics.
- The percentage of students attaining five or more A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, was well below average in 2013. The percentage of high GCSE grades was far lower than that seen nationally.
- Teaching requires improvement because in too many lessons it is not good enough to generate rapid progress.
- There are still teachers whose lessons do not inspire students, who do not prepare work to match students' abilities and who rarely set and mark homework.
- Aspects of students' behaviour are inadequate. Behaviour is not always good enough around the school and occasionally it lapses during lessons.
- The sixth form requires improvement because, due to falling numbers of students, a limited range of courses is available. Only vocational subjects are being taught in Year 12 this year.
- Senior leaders in post during the academy's first year failed to improve standards. The poor GCSE results confirmed that they were ineffective in generating the essential improvements needed. The academy's capacity to secure future improvement is therefore inadequate.
- The academy could not recruit specialist teachers in its first year. A large number of supply teachers in English and mathematics contributed to students' inadequate progress.
- A few middle leaders lack the skills to drive standards up and lead their teams to success.
- Students sometimes lack experience of persevering when they are stuck and of taking responsibility for how well they do and, at times, this negatively affects behaviour.
- Before January 2013, the governors did not fully appreciate that progress was inadequate; they had not seen enough accurate data which delayed their taking steps to challenge the academy's leaders concerning students' underachievement.
- Statutory requirements for safeguarding and child protection procedures are not fully met.

The school has the following strengths

- This term, more teachers are delivering good lessons which students enjoy.
- Sports and the performing arts are successful features of the academy's work.
- Practically all students feel safe and are happy at school. Many acquire social skills and confidence which will serve them well in their future lives.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 36 part lessons, two of which were jointly observed with the Principal.
- Inspectors held meetings with several groups of students, members of the senior leadership team, leaders in charge of subjects and other aspects of the academy’s work and other staff with positions of responsibility. The lead inspector met the Chair of Governors and two other governors, the regional director of the Academies Enterprise Trust, and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors discussed lessons they had seen with teaching staff and examined a range of documents, including the academy’s own evaluation, improvement plans, data about students’ progress, standards, exclusions, attendance and behaviour. They examined the academy’s single central record of staff checks and policies and procedures related to safeguarding and child protection.
- Year 11 students were sitting mock examinations during the inspection so none of their lessons took place. A large number of learning support assistants were involved in these examinations, scribing for those with special educational needs, for example, so few of them were in the classes they normally support. Inspectors had few opportunities to evaluate the quality of their support work in lessons.
- Inspectors looked at a range of students’ work in lessons.
- Inspectors took into account 56 parents’ responses to Ofsted’s on-line Parent View questionnaire.

Inspection team

Clare Gillies, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stephanie Matthews	Additional Inspector
Una Maria Stevens	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.

The academy should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Information about this school

- The New Forest Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2012. When its predecessor school, Hardley School and Sixth Form, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require significant improvement and given a notice to improve. The academy is sponsored by the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- The academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. This is partly because the number of secondary age students in the local area has been declining for several years.
- Over 98% of students are White British, with very few from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- An extremely small proportion of students speak English as an additional language, of whom none is at an early stage of learning English.
- An average proportion of students are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families. The school has a small number of looked after children and no children of service families.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is just below the national average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. The most common needs relate to behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- About one in four students is eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding, which is for students who did not achieve the expected Level 4 in reading or mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The academy has a small suite of rooms known as Fresh Start, where students with special educational needs or those who struggle in normal classes receive pastoral and academic support.
- A few students attend alternative, off-site education provision arranged by the Forest Education Centre.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is good or better by consistently checking that all teachers:
 - set and mark homework regularly, give students clear advice about how they can improve their work and plan time for them to absorb and respond to the comments they receive
 - explore the meaning of subject-specific and general words in all subjects and extend students' vocabulary and writing skills
 - provide work which matches students' different abilities, including in classes which are setted
 - observe and learn from the high quality teaching that exists in the academy.
- Increase progress to raise standards by ensuring that:
 - the percentage of students attaining five GCSE grades A* to C, including English and

mathematics, matches the national average in 2014

- all students, particularly the most able, aim for and attain higher GCSE grades and the percentage of A*/A grades rises
 - the gap between boys' and girls' achievement is narrowed to at least that seen nationally
 - students supported by the pupil premium make the same good progress they have made in Key Stage 3 when they move into Key Stage 4
 - progress is more rapid in mathematics in Years 10 and 11, particularly for students with special educational needs
 - steps are taken to address underachievement in subjects which performed significantly below the national average in 2013.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management so that senior leaders:
- are realistic about the academy's performance and energetically seek to improve.
 - confirm standards and levels of progress by supporting and analysing middle leaders' work and using external support to check their predictions for students' progress are correct
 - act swiftly when underachievement is identified
 - extend the content of professional development for middle leaders and teachers
 - sharpen their assessment of the quality of teaching and learning
 - work more effectively with staff to eliminate any unacceptable student behaviour.
- Meet all statutory requirements for safeguarding by senior leaders and governors by:
- checking regularly that the single central register is complete and up to date
 - reviewing the child protection policy annually
 - improving the quality of training on safeguarding and child protection and ensure that all staff receive it
 - sharpening the analysis and records on behaviour, bullying and racist incidents, children on the child protection register, children of concern and students whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Year 11 students entered the predecessor school with average standards, but their standards had fallen by the end of the academy's first year. In 2013, less than half the students attained five or more GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, and less than 20% of students eligible for pupil premium funding did. Boys' results were much lower than girls'.
- The gaps between results for students supported by the pupil premium and others were wide: two GCSE grades in English and more than two grades in mathematics. Academy data suggest that the gaps will be reduced in 2014, which is an indication of the impact of improved leadership in the two subjects. However, that the gaps have not been eliminated shows that the school's senior leaders and managers have not tackled this issue with the determination needed.
- Overall progress in science is close to that seen nationally. About 40 students took science subjects separately and attained close to the national percentage of A* to C grades. They did not match the national percentage of A*/A grades. This happened in practically all other subjects as well. This reflects that more able students make inadequate progress.
- Results were significantly below average in GCSE drama, geography, history, modern foreign languages, information technology and technology. Higher ability students had sat GCSE mathematics in 2012 when they were in Year 10; half of them attained A*/A grades and all took a further mathematics qualification in 2013.
- In many subjects, students made far too little progress in 2013. This was particularly the case for lower attainers, those supported through school action and students eligible for pupil premium funding. Progress in English and mathematics did not come close to the national expectations of the progress students should make by the end of Year 11; those eligible for pupil premium made even less progress than others.
- Sixth form results were well below average in 2013 but, from low starting points, the small number of students had made average progress in most subjects. This progress continues for two Year 13 students and 25 Year 12 students following vocational courses; several of them are retaking GCSE English and mathematics.
- Students taking BTEC public services in the sixth form achieve well. Year 11 students following a range of vocational courses attained useful qualifications in 2013. The academy produces its best results in these subjects.
- Based on academy data and work seen during the inspection, students' progress in English is better where pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding has supported effective reading programmes, one-to-one support and other intervention strategies.
- With improved data presentation since September 2013, identification and action on underachievement is beginning to be tackled more methodically. Nevertheless, progress is not yet good enough, particularly in mathematics in Years 10 and 11 and for some students with special educational needs.
- The small number of students attending off-site provision make reasonable progress, except for those with poor attendance. Staff working in Fresh Start monitor these students' behaviour and progress. They have well-established contacts with the Forest Education Centre and it provides regular feedback.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Students in Years 7 to 11 experience less than good teaching too often to make the rapid progress required to reach closer to average standards. Teaching in the sixth form is mostly good, but it is not easy to have debates and discussions in classes with very few students.
- The quality of marking ranges from regular, detailed corrections with comments including how work can be improved, to the occasional tick, with factual and spelling mistakes and poor

presentation ignored.

- Some teachers do not automatically plan different tasks to match students' range of abilities and skills. Even in setted classes, the same work is provided for all students on occasions. This slows progress because it is too easy for some students but too difficult for others.
- Teaching is now better than the 2013 results would suggest because there are fewer supply teachers and most weak teachers have been replaced. This has generated better progress, particularly in English and mathematics, and is an important reason why teaching is judged as 'requiring improvement' rather than 'inadequate'.
- Generated by the head of English, the intense focus on students' reading, spelling and other skills is working, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Particularly at the end of science lessons, students write short answers to questions on the work they have done. This effectively improves their writing and learning and checks their understanding. However, too few teachers emphasise subject-specific vocabulary or discuss unfamiliar words.
- Teaching in English and mathematics still has lessons that require improvement. However, this is in a minority of lessons as teaching is increasingly effective with the greater stability in staffing, more specialist teachers and the impact of the leaders of these subjects who have not been long in post. Teaching in mathematics generates understanding so that students learn concepts well. The experienced head of English, who took up post a term before the school became an academy, has improved students' writing skills.
- Teaching in sessions where students work in small groups or one-to-one, usually to improve literacy or mathematics, is increasingly effective and the good progress they make is seen in improved reading and spelling ages and development of their numeracy skills.
- Students studying in Fresh Start receive helpful academic and personal support which improves their attitudes to learning and their confidence to cope in normal classes. Pupil premium funding contributes to the facility's running costs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- Although students are not at immediate risk, requirements for safeguarding and child protection are not fully met and is central to the judgement of 'inadequate' for the school's work to keep students safe.
- Aspects of students' behaviour are inadequate and at best, it requires improvement. Behaviour in lessons reflects the quality of teaching. When teaching is good, the students are attentive, keen to learn, answer questions enthusiastically and contribute willingly to discussions. When students are not taught well, the opposite is true. Such is the case in a minority of lessons, particularly in the lower sets, and here relationships between students and with staff require improvement and behaviour degenerates to become inadequate. For example in more than one Year 9 mathematics lessons tasks were not well planned for the ability of different groups. As a result a minority of students were prone to low level disruption such as whistling and table tapping which negatively affected their own, and others', progress.
- Outside of lessons, the behaviour of a very small minority of students is not good enough. Horseplay goes too far or students behave inappropriately. However, most students are polite and welcoming.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen, reflecting that students are behaving better in lessons now there is greater stability in staffing. The academy is vigilant about following up absence, and attendance is now closer to the national average, but it is still an issue in Year 9. Progress in this year is not as good as it is in Years 7 and 8.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound. Students are fully aware that the academy's ethnic composition is different to many other parts of the United Kingdom. They consider news items in tutor times and have whole days on a range of important issues.
- Students are aware that bullying and discrimination are not tolerated. They discuss racist and homophobic bullying without embarrassment and are realistic that it happens, but say it is rare.

They receive regular reminders about being safe; for example in areas such as health or the internet.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The actions taken by the established most senior leaders since the academy opened had very little impact on results in 2013, showing leaders do not have the capacity to drive the improvements that are needed for the academy to be successful in the future.
- When the academy opened, it was difficult for senior and middle leaders to tackle students' underachievement for several reasons, some beyond the academy's control. These included great difficulty in recruiting teachers and a falling student roll.
- Senior leaders tried, and failed, to appoint specialist English and mathematics teachers. However, their deployment of existing staff was not imaginative enough to tackle the crucial staffing gaps. Some students had a string of supply teachers in mathematics.
- The academy sponsor quickly realised that progress was poor and organised experienced consultants to spend many days supporting middle leaders and teachers, predominantly in English and mathematics. This high level of intense support has made some difference but cannot continue. The over reliance of senior leaders on external support demonstrates there is inadequate capacity to improve. Nevertheless, the sponsor's regional director is fully involved in turning the academy's fortunes around.
- Teachers' assessments of achievement were not always accurate last year, so predictions of 2013 results were misleadingly over optimistic. Senior leaders' checks on how well the academy was doing and improvement plans suggest that leaders did not confront the depth of underachievement; GCSE results are wrongly described as 'very good' on its website and have negatively affected what is expected of students. However, this is not the case where careful and well-monitored spending of pupil premium funds last year led to better progress for students supported under this initiative in Key Stage 3.
- Too much variation in the progress of different groups and the underperformance of too many students mean that, despite the best of intentions, the academy is not providing equality of opportunity in Years 7 to 11.
- Teachers' professional development has not been effective in driving improvement; it is now gathering momentum. Teachers know their performance is linked to their salary increase and that poor performance will be addressed.
- The subject leaders of English, mathematics and science lead well, but their impact was undermined by the large number of supply teachers last year. Their strengths in setting high standards and supporting teachers are now emerging and they, rather than the senior leaders, are behind the improvements seen during this year. The quality of some other middle leaders is less secure with further, and as yet unproven, changes ahead to address known weaknesses. This also contributes to the academy's capacity to improve being judged as inadequate.
- Leadership of special educational needs was inadequate when the academy opened but, following unsuccessful support for the special educational needs coordinator, it was several months before a vice principal, with relevant experience, took over. The register was assessed accurately and the right support for these students is being put in place, but the situation was not tackled fast enough by senior leaders. It is too soon to see the full impact of new initiatives and, although there are positive signs, the leadership of special educational needs provision requires further improvement.
- The leadership, teaching, and provision for physical education are strong, with high participation levels and enjoyment. Extra-curricular provision in the performing arts, in fieldwork, trips and visits is another strength.
- Weak elements of the curriculum include the instability of courses in the declining sixth form and the limited amount of time for French (the only modern foreign language taught). The latter was a short-term response to staffing difficulties in the modern foreign languages department and the need to increase time for English and mathematics. Nevertheless, the academy's focus

on equality of opportunity is exemplified by its determination to keep its sixth form open; another year in a familiar environment makes a significant difference to these students' social skills and confidence.

- Numerous partnerships generate opportunities for teachers to liaise with colleagues in other schools, for students to visit universities and to be involved in the local community. The academy provides supportive career guidance to Years 11 and 12 students on their future education and work plans. The number of Year 11 students not proceeding to education, employment or training is below national figures.
- The academy works hard to involve parents in their children's education. The few responses to Parent View were less positive than those to questionnaires organised by the academy. One in four did not feel their children are taught well and less than half agreed strongly with any of the positive statements.
- The most senior leaders have not been robust enough in effectively supporting the governors in their duty to ensure safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet all statutory requirements. This is one of the fundamental reasons why leadership and management have been found to be inadequate.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Following an external monitoring visit in January 2013, which highlighted that the academy was not making enough progress in raising standards for all students, governors responded positively and became far more involved in understanding and challenging the academy's work. The Chair of Governors is fully aware of where there are weaknesses in leadership.
 - Governors have welcomed the improved presentation of data and now fully appreciate how weak the GCSE results were in the academy's first year and where there are signs of improvement. They probed the Principal relentlessly about the results and are totally realistic about how much remains to be done. They know the measures taken to remove weak teachers and are involved in performance management arrangements so that teachers' salaries are linked to pay awards.
 - Governors know all about pupil premium and catch-up funding, how it is spent and its positive impact on progress in Years 7 and 8. They appreciate the sponsor's contributions to the academy and attend its training as needed.
 - Governors are failing to meet statutory requirements for safeguarding. They have not reviewed the child protection policy annually. All staff have been checked, but their disclosure records are not inserted in full in the single central record. Academy records of behaviour, bullying and racist incidents lack rigorous and concerted analysis by all staff concerned. The arrangements to deliver child protection training for all staff are insufficiently robust; the quality of the materials used is poor and not fully accurate.

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	138585
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	433615

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	540
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lisa Hayes
Principal	Andrew Dyer
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	02380 891 192
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