

Braunton Academy

Barton Lane, Braunton, EX33 2BP

Inspection dates 20–21 March 2014

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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Since 2012 the numbers of students achieving five good quality GCSEs, including English and mathematics has dropped to below the national average.
- Achievement requires improvement because students are not yet making consistently good progress across all subjects.
- The proportion of good and outstanding teaching is not high enough.
- Students' attitudes to learning are variable which affects the pace at which they learn.
- Levels of challenge are not high enough in some lessons.
- Leadership and management require improvement because actions to improve teaching and achievement have not been taken quickly enough.
- Teachers do not use marking effectively enough to allow students to improve their work.
- There are inconsistencies in the way some subject leaders check how well students are achieving in their subject areas.
- Exclusions are too high.

The school has the following strengths

- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a high quality.
- The quality of pastoral care is very good. Students feel safe and well supported and the quality of this provision helps to ensure a happy and harmonious school.
- There are some examples of good and outstanding teaching.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are well supported.
- Students' behaviour in lessons is good and they behave sensibly around school.
- Additional funding is used effectively to narrow the gap between rates of progress of different groups of students.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have identified correctly the school's weaknesses and have now put in place appropriate plans for improvement.
- Extra-curricular opportunities offered by the school are a strength

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 37 lessons, of which six were joint observations with senior leaders. Inspectors also made a number of short visits to classrooms across a range of subjects, including assemblies and tutorial sessions.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, pastoral leaders and the Chair and other members of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors spoke to students in lessons, at breaks and at lunchtimes. They also met with various groups of students.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s checks on how well it is doing, the school improvement plan, and statistical information about students’ progress, achievement, behaviour and exclusions. They looked at the work from a wide range of students.
- Inspectors looked at the school’s documentation relating to the management of the work of staff, training arrangements for teachers and other staff, lesson observations, and arrangements for the safeguarding of students and for governance.
- Inspectors took into account the 76 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 55 responses to the staff questionnaire as well as two letters from parents and telephone responses from parents.

Inspection team

Christine Young, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sarah Jones	Additional Inspector
Justine Hocking	Additional Inspector
Noureddin Khassal	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Braunton Academy converted to become an academy in April 2012. When its predecessor school, called Braunton Community College, was previously inspected by Ofsted in September 2010, it was judged to be good and improving school.
- Braunton Academy is smaller than the average-sized, mixed, 11 to 16 comprehensive school.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students eligible for additional funding is below average. (In this academy, the additional money allocated by the government is for looked-after children and those eligible for free school meals, students with a parent in the armed services, and to help Year 7 students with their reading).
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs who need additional support is below the national average. The proportion of students who need extra help or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school has received the International Schools Award, the Geography Schools Quality Mark, the Happiness and Wellbeing Award and the Healthy Schools Award. It also has the Investors in People award at silver level and the STEM Big Bang award.
- The school is in partnership with Bicton College providing a hub for land-based studies.
- A small number of students attend training away from the academy at Petroc College, which specialises in construction, hairdressing and beauty.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress for secondary schools.
- The school does enter students early for GCSE examinations.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching so that students make consistently good progress by:
 - sharing the existing good and outstanding practice to raise standards of teaching across the school and raise teachers' expectations of their students
 - ensuring students' work is set at the right levels.
 - ensuring that all staff provide high-quality marking and feedback so that all students know how to improve their work
 - ensuring that the presentation of students' work is of the highest quality.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that middle managers take direct responsibility for the quality of teaching and the progress of students in their specific areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Since 2012 there has been a drop, to below national averages, in the number of students who achieved five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, especially middle ability students and, in particular, boys. This was particularly evident in English where too many students did not make the progress they were capable of.
- Students enter the school with broadly average attainment. Achievement requires improvement because not enough students are making good progress by the time they leave the school in Year 11.
- The school's current progress information indicates that attainment is improving. Although attainment in mathematics is lower, evidence from the school's most recent tracking indicates that attainment in English is rising rapidly.
- In 2013, students' achievement in additional science, drama, history, geography and English was below national averages. Conversely, performance in Italian, statistics, English literature, biology, physics, technology, religious education and physical education was above national averages.
- In 2013, students who followed work-related courses made reasonable progress, and achieved broadly average results.
- Students for whom the school receives additional funding take part in intervention and support programmes. In English, they make the same progress as their peers. In mathematics, although the gap is closing, students are approximately one GCSE grade behind their classmates.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs receive extra help and support when they need it. In 2013, the performance of this group was below average. However, the school's information indicates that these students are now making good progress.
- In Year 7, the catch-up funding is used effectively to provide good support for those students who find reading difficult. Students are now making good progress in their literacy skills and reading more often. They find the support they receive enjoyable and very helpful.
- Some higher achieving students, if they are ready to gain a good grade, are entered early in Year 10, for GCSE examinations in statistics or a modern foreign language. This builds confidence and gives them some familiarity with the examination process.
- A small number of students who attend training outside the school are successful and achieve well. Students have developed greater confidence and self-esteem through raising their aspirations and focusing on preparations for future life.
- Parents are happy with the progress made by their children and greatly value the individual support they are given.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time is not yet good and requires improvement, because it is too variable and does not ensure that students achieve as well as they should. Also, the school does not effectively share the existing good practice to enable teachers to learn from each other and to raise teachers' expectations of what students can achieve.
- Some teachers expect too little of their students, both in terms of work-rate and intellectual demand. In these weaker lessons, learning is slow and activities are uninteresting and undemanding. The work that is set is often too easy.
- Students in a key stage four English lesson failed to make reasonable progress, because the

teacher did not have high enough expectations of them. The work lacked challenge and failed to motivate students to learn. However, despite this, students behaved well and were attentive in the class.

- In an outstanding Year 9 art lesson, strong relationships, coupled with high expectations, both contributed to outstanding attitudes to learning. Effective demonstration and explanation of techniques used by the teacher inspired the students to continually improve their work.
- In a Year 9 history lesson students were captivated by the passion and enthusiasm demonstrated by the teacher while exploring source materials to build up an evidence base. All students were challenged and motivated to clearly show a love of learning.
- In weaker teaching, students are not provided with enough opportunities to develop their literacy skills and apply them to extended writing activities; consequently, they do not always learn effectively.
- The school has correctly identified improving the quality and consistency of marking and feedback as a priority. Some marking is very detailed which gives students helpful comments on how to improve; other work is not marked regularly or receives no more than a tick and this results in students not knowing how to make their work better and how to achieve the higher grades.
- The presentation of work in too many students' exercise books is untidy and messy. This shows that students do not take pride in their work and achievements, but also teachers do not set high enough expectations in terms of the quality of work produced.
- Carefully targeted support is helping disabled students and those with special educational needs to catch up with their classmates. Teaching assistants and additional adults are often deployed well and provide helpful support to small groups of students and to individuals.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are good ambassadors for their school; they are calm, polite and courteous both in the classroom and around the school site. They are well meaning, inquisitive and fun to talk to and show a respect for each other. The atmosphere in school is one of caring and tolerance.
- Students say that they feel very safe because they are well cared for by teachers and other adults. They have a very clear understanding of the different forms of bullying, including e-safety, and report that bullying is rare, and should any instances of bullying occur, they are quickly resolved.
- The responses to Parent View indicate that the vast majority of parents agree that their children are safe at school, well cared for and that they would recommend the school to other parents.
- On the few occasions when lessons are interrupted by low-level disruption it is due to less engaging teaching that does not challenge students enough in their learning.
- There are well-monitored procedures for ensuring the good behaviour and safety of those who attend off-site provision. Students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- The school's approach to behaviour management is very successful in broadening students' understanding of how to conduct themselves when in difficult situations.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is well supported by the nurturing values of the school. Students speak very highly of the chances they are given to take part in activities beyond the classroom.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because there is an over reliance in the use of external and internal exclusions for students who present challenging behaviour. As a result, exclusions are too high.
- Permanent exclusions are low.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because teaching and learning needs to improve so that all lessons are at least good. Leaders have not been active enough in checking on those groups of students who could be doing better.
 - The school's evaluation of how well it is doing is thorough and well planned but has been over-optimistic in its judgements.
 - Some subject leaders and those responsible for groups of students do not use information on their progress rigorously enough to identify when they need to organise additional support.
 - Middle managers are not sufficiently accountable for ensuring the quality of teaching and the progress made by students in their subject areas.
 - The school has recently introduced a more robust performance management system for teachers, which is accurate and clearly identifies the skills that need to improve with a strong focus on developing middle leaders and on improving teaching; its impact has yet to be seen.
 - The quality of teachers' work and students' progress is linked to pay progression and to the national Teachers Standards.
 - Good systems are now in place to monitor the quality of lessons and the overall progress of students. Clear feedback, coupled with appropriate advice and training, is offered to teachers whose performance falls short of the mark.
 - The school's tracking and monitoring systems are improving and staff are receiving training to ensure they use the information to develop well-targeted interventions to maximise students' progress. However, this is not yet fully embedded, particularly with middle leaders.
 - The range of subjects is broad and balanced and caters well for all students' needs. The school operates a personalised approach ensuring all students are able to follow courses that are appropriate for them.
 - Through the school's partnership with Bicton College, East Devon, students have opportunities to achieve a work-related qualification in land-based studies. A new outdoor classroom has been created, which includes a poly-tunnel, tool shed, workshop areas and gardens.
 - The quality of display around school is good as it celebrates the work of students effectively.
 - The school has international links with many countries, including France, Italy, Austria, Germany, Martinique, Uganda and United States of America, which provide opportunities for exchanges and cultural visits.
 - Students make exceptionally good use of the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that are provided for them which develop clear, personal values, and make an impact on school life. These include Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and public speaking, leadership opportunities through sport, and musical, dramatic and artistic experiences. Over 70 students are learning how to play a musical instrument.
 - The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is demonstrated by its determination to give all students the chance to excel and achieve their potential.
 - Year 11 students behave maturely and take on extra responsibilities across the school in roles such as head boy and head girl; the school council, prefects, learning mentors and reading partners.
 - The school uses an independent school improvement partner to help with school assessment of how well it is doing.
 - All safeguarding requirements are met. The staff are well trained and have a good awareness of child-protection and risk-assessment issues.

 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the strengths of the school and has an accurate understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school further. It challenges and holds the school to account in positive ways.
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- Governors demonstrate a good grasp of the current school performance, including the quality of teaching and students’ rate of progress and achievement, and how these compare with other academies. Governors have a good understanding of data and some have completed RAISEonline training.
 - The governing body ensures that additional funding is used appropriately and it works well with the school to monitor its impact on students’ progress.
 - The governing body is fully aware of the school’s performance management system and this helps it to accurately assess teachers’ performance against the pay they receive.
 - All governors have undertaken appropriate training and are confident about their roles and responsibilities.
 - Governors make regular visits to the school and link with subject areas and take active steps to engage with parents.
 - Governors ensure that the school meets its statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding.
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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

Unique reference number	138041
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	441140

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Academy Converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	657
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ben Byrom
Headteacher	David Sharratt
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