

Chosen Hill School

Brookfield Road, Gloucester, GL3 2PL

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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

- Achievement requires improvement because too many students have not made consistently good progress across a number of subjects.
- In 2013, the proportion of students gaining five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics dipped and the proportion making good or better progress in English dropped to below the national average.
- Although improving, there is still some teaching which requires improvement, and good and outstanding teaching is not sufficiently shared across the academy.
- Teachers do not always plan work that is pitched at the right level for different abilities or check learning closely enough in lessons to adapt their teaching so that all students achieve well.
- Teachers do not always question students sharply enough to deepen thinking and extend learning.
- Actions taken by leaders to improve the quality of teaching have not yet resulted in good achievement for all students.
- Policies and systems introduced since the previous inspection to improve teaching are not consistently applied by all staff, and some leaders have been slow to challenge this.
- Some staff feel that they are not fully informed or properly consulted about the work of the academy.
- Although it is improving, the sixth form requires improvement because the quality of teaching is not consistently good and the proportions of students achieving better grades at A and AS levels have not been high enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors are better informed because they have introduced more rigorous systems to monitor the work of the academy. They are increasingly challenging leaders to do better.
- There are examples of good and outstanding teaching across a variety of subjects.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Students are polite and courteous, and have positive attitudes to learning. They are confident that they are safe in school.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported through a variety of extra-curricular activities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 43 lessons, of which 12 were joint observations with senior staff. A number of other lessons were visited briefly to look at students' books to check the quality of marking, the promotion of literacy, and students' progress over time.
- Inspectors observed other aspects of the academy day including two assemblies, registration time, students' behaviour at break and lunchtime, and students' arrival and departure from the academy.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and five groups of students. Four members of the governing body, including the Chair, were also interviewed.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 155 parents and carers who responded to the Parent View online questionnaire, a phone call from a parent and two letters from parents, and 123 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the academy's work and reviewed a wide range of documents including the school's own data on students' current progress; its self-evaluation and improvement plans; information on the work of staff; training arrangements for teachers and other staff; checks on teaching, students' behaviour and attendance; the safeguarding of students; teachers' performance management; and details of governance.

Inspection team

Ann Behan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lesley Voaden	Additional Inspector
Phil Taylor	Additional Inspector
Justine Hocking	Additional Inspector
Steven Cartlidge	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is a larger than average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students from a minority ethnic heritage is below average. Very few students speak English as an additional 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 average.
- The proportion of students for whom the academy receives the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is well below average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A small number of Year 11 students receive part of their education away from the academy site. They follow courses provided by the Gloucester and Forest Alternative Provision School, the Hospital School, and the Raikes Centre, Gloucester Alternative Provision.
- During the inspection, Years 11, 12 and 13 were involved in external examinations.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better to enable all students to achieve well, including in the sixth form, by ensuring that:
 - all teachers plan work that is at the right level for all students
 - all teachers check students' learning closely during lessons and adapt their teaching accordingly
 - good and outstanding practice is shared across the academy
 - all teachers use questioning to deepen students' understanding and challenge their thinking.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders at all levels make certain that all policies and systems for improving teaching are consistently applied by all staff
 - leaders and managers communicate more effectively with staff at all levels.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- There was a decline in the proportion of students gaining five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics from well above the national average in 2012, to broadly in line with the national average in 2013. Given their starting points this indicates that students are not making the progress that would be expected of them.
- The progress of students in English in Year 11 dipped in 2013 and not enough students made the progress that they should. Teachers identified that students had not performed well in writing, and much has been done to improve the quality of writing across the school. Current checks on students' progress and work seen during the inspection suggests that there are significant improvements in English and students' progress is now in line with national expectations.
- The progress of students in mathematics in Year 11 dropped from being well above the national average in 2012 to be broadly in line in 2013. This was because students were entered for the examination early and many, particularly the most able, were not ready to reach the higher grades. This policy of early entry has ended and expectations have shifted away from students achieving a grade C to ensuring that all students reach their potential in this subject. Current academy checks on students' progress and work in books show that progress in mathematics is now above national expectations.
- In 2013, students eligible for support through the pupil premium attained about a grade and a half below their peers in GCSE English, and about a grade below in GCSE mathematics. These students also made less progress in these subjects than their peers. However, current checks on students' progress show that the gap has narrowed in the present Year 11 and that it is reducing across all other year groups. This is because the academy is making good use of additional funding to provide in-class support, one-to-one teaching and extra lessons before and after school and at lunchtime.
- Disabled students, those with special educational needs, minority ethnic students and those who speak English as an additional language receive well-focused help and make similar progress to their peers. This demonstrates the academy's determination to ensure there is no discrimination.
- Most-able students make similar progress to their peers. Current information shows that since early entry for GCSE examinations has ceased they are on target to reach the higher grades of A and A* in a number of subjects.
- Students who are eligible for additional help with literacy and numeracy as part of the government's Year 7 'catch-up' programme are given extra, well-targeted support and the gap between them and other students is narrowing.
- A small number of Year 11 students attend work-related courses off-site. The quality of provision and progress of these students is checked regularly and they achieve as well as their peers.
- The achievement of sixth form students is improving. Students enter with attainment that is broadly average. They achieve well in some subjects but their achievement requires improvement in others. The variation in their progress depends on the consistency and quality of teaching. Progress is better at GCE A level than at GCE AS level. The proportion of students staying on at the end of Year 12 is below what would be expected but is improving. Increasingly, more students are completing their courses because the academy has put in place better tracking and intervention systems so students in danger of falling behind are identified sooner and are given more timely additional help. Current data show that students are largely on track to meet their targets. Students are being given better support to achieve at least a grade C in GCSE English and mathematics before they leave the academy.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although there is an improving picture of good and better teaching, it has not been consistently good over time, and there is still too much that requires improvement. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that teaching is getting better with some good and outstanding practice. However, this good practice is not shared across all subjects.
- The use of information about students' progress to aid lesson planning has improved significantly since the previous inspection. However, where teaching requires improvement, teachers do not always use this information to set work at the right level or adapt their teaching during lessons to respond to students' learning, so some students do not progress as well as they could.
- The teaching of literacy across subjects has improved since the previous inspection. Students are encouraged to read widely and many subjects provide opportunities for students to practise speaking, listening and writing skills. However, this is not consistent across the academy, and there are missed opportunities for students to extend their writing skills and so make better progress.
- There have been improvements in marking since the previous inspection when it was identified as a weakness. Most work is marked regularly and teachers give students guidance on how to improve their work, but this is not yet consistent across the academy.
- Sometimes, teachers' questions do not challenge students to think more deeply about their work and there are missed opportunities to extend students' learning and progress. In some lessons, teachers rely on volunteers to answer questions and do not check the understanding of all students in the class.
- When learning is most effective, teachers have good subject knowledge and their expectations are high. They use information about students' progress to set work that is pitched at the right level for different abilities, use questioning to deepen and extend understanding, and adapt their teaching during lessons in response to learning that is taking place, so that all students make the best possible progress.
- Teaching assistants support individuals and groups of students well. They play a key role in helping disabled students, those with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and those students who are eligible for extra help through additional government funding. As a result, these students make at least similar progress to their peers.
- Students told inspectors that they enjoy their learning because of the interesting activities provided in lessons. They said teachers work hard to support them with their learning, and that many go out of their way to provide additional support before and after school, and during break and lunchtime. The large majority of parents and carers agree with the view that students are well taught.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. There is a positive and happy atmosphere around the academy. Students are courteous, polite and respectful to one another and to adults.
- Students behave well in lessons. They arrive promptly, work well together in groups and pairs, and have good relationships with adults who work with them. They enjoy their learning, and generally concentrate well, even in lessons where teaching is less than good. However, in some lessons where teaching requires improvement, while students still remain enthusiastic about their learning, a few allow their minds to wander and they become inattentive.
- Students are highly positive about the academy and are very proud to be part of it. One student said, 'This is an amazing school', and another said, 'I am glad I came here, I would not want to go anywhere else.'
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say they feel safe and well cared for, and most parents and carers agree. Students are confident that staff will provide help and advice if they have any problems, and value the information that they receive through assemblies, and personal and social education, about staying safe and healthy.
- Students have a good understanding of different kinds of bullying, including racist, homophobic

and cyber-bullying, and the dangers of the internet and social networks. They told inspectors that bullying is rare and that, when it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff.

- Attendance is improving and currently is above the national average. The academy has worked hard to ensure all students realise the benefits of regular attendance and to provide additional support for those students in danger of becoming persistent absentees.
- There are good systems in place to manage students' behaviour and to support vulnerable students, and as a result, exclusions are below the national average.
- Sixth formers are good role models for younger students. They have positive attitudes to learning and make significant contributions to the calm and purposeful atmosphere of the academy.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership team of the academy has been strengthened by four new appointments and a restructuring. The headteacher and her new team have introduced changes that are having a positive effect on teaching, the use of systems to check students' progress, students' behaviour, and the sixth form. However, it is too early to judge the full impact of these changes.
- Although systems for checking the quality of teaching have improved since the previous inspection and more detailed policies and monitoring procedures are in place, not all senior leaders or subject leaders check that all staff are applying these and there are inconsistencies in their use across the academy. In addition, good and better practice is not shared effectively across the academy.
- The majority of staff who responded to the questionnaire were, overall, positive about the work of the school. However, a minority felt that not all school policies were consistently applied by staff and that communication in school could be improved.
- The policy for teachers' performance management has recently been reviewed so that teachers are held more accountable for the quality of their teaching and students' achievement. There is a greater focus on teachers' performance when decisions about salary increases are made and the academy challenges underperformance appropriately.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity carefully. Any students who are not performing as they should are targeted for additional help and support. The academy is using pupil premium and 'catch-up' funding effectively to narrow the gap between eligible students and others.
- The curriculum, including that provided in the sixth form, is reviewed regularly and provides a wide range of courses for all students. The range of subjects offered to post-16 students has recently been extended to include more work-related courses so that staying-on rates and achievement of students are improving. The academy has strong links with colleges of further and higher education, and universities, and provides all students with good advice on choices of courses at the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form so that almost all students go on to further study or careers of their choice.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Students value the variety of extra-curricular opportunities on offer, particularly those in the arts and sport, and talked enthusiastically about opportunities they have to travel overseas, for example to Spain, France, Germany, India and China.
- The academy enjoys positive relationships with parents and carers. Most of the parents and carers who responded to Parent View would recommend the academy to others. The academy has made good use of external consultants, including subject examiners, to help staff improve the quality of teaching, provide support for subject and senior leaders, and to assist governors in accurately evaluating the education provided by the academy.
- Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection, including risk assessments for off-site education, meet statutory requirements. The academy takes the protection of students seriously.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are ambitious for the academy. They were disappointed with the drop in GCSE results in 2013 and were concerned that systems leaders were using to monitor teaching and students' achievement were not rigorous enough to predict this. They have introduced additional systems to check that the information they are given by the senior leaders is accurate. They have used external examination officers, inspectors and advisers to moderate the work of the academy, and have made additional appointments to the senior leadership team to strengthen its capacity.
- Governors visit the academy regularly, take part in lessons, scrutinise books and talk to senior and middle leaders, staff and students. They have received training in what constitutes good teaching and in the analysis of information about student attainment and progress so that they are able to accurately compare the success of the academy with schools nationally. Increasingly, they are rigorously challenging the senior leaders to do better.
- Governors have introduced a more rigorous system for monitoring teachers' performance which is closely linked to the quality of teaching, students' achievement and teachers' pay. There are examples of where underperformance has been challenged successfully.
- Governors manage the finances of the academy carefully. They monitor how additional government funding is spent and the effectiveness of its use for eligible students.
- Governors make sure that all statutory child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, and undertake all the relevant training to keep abreast of changes.

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	136623
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	431084

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1,403
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Dale
Headteacher	Sue Turner
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 May 2012
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