

# Greensward Academy

Greensward Lane, Hockley, SS5 5HG

**Inspection dates** 10–11 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Students do well in this academy. They enter at national averages in Year 7 and by the end of Year 11 they reach well above national standards across a range of subjects.
- All students make outstanding progress in mathematics because of the outstanding teaching they receive.
- Students who join the academy at or below the national average make much better progress in English than similar students nationally.
- Reading is a strength of the academy.
- Teaching is good. The academy is a nurturing place that inspires teachers and students to 'Make their Best Better'.
- The academy caters well for students in history, languages, drama, music and physical education.
- The principal and other leaders provide effective support to other schools and are keen to learn from each other within the academy.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, expect high standards. Procedures for checking how good teaching is are well developed and, as a result, teaching and students' achievement is improving.
- Behaviour is good as teachers show respect for students. Students respect their teachers and each other within this courteous community.
- Actions to ensure students are kept safe in and around the academy are outstanding.
- Students receive helpful advice and guidance, so that nearly every student goes on to employment or further studies.
- The sixth form is good. There is an appropriate range of courses. A very large majority go on to study at university.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students do not do as well in GCSE science, technology and geography as they do in other subjects; and more-able students do not do as well in English. These subjects are improving but are not yet outstanding.
- Marking and checks on how well students are doing are not used consistently across the academy to ensure that all groups of students make excellent progress.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was part of a pilot for the recording of evidence about the quality of teaching, therefore teaching was not graded in each individual lesson. The strengths and weaknesses in each lesson were recorded and used along with evidence from the school to come to an overall evaluation of the quality of teaching in the school.
- Inspectors observed teaching in 34 lessons, of which ten were observed jointly with senior leaders. The total time spent observing teaching in lessons was 18 hours.
- As well as looking at students' work in lessons, inspectors carried out two scrutinies of students' work, of Year 7 students who enter the school above average and Year 9 work in science.
- Discussions were held with four groups of students, about the lesson that had been jointly observed, teaching, marking, how they know how well they are doing and homework.
- Inspectors also attended registration periods and two assemblies.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior and other staff, two governors and other groups of students.
- Discussions were also held separately with representatives from the Academies Enterprise Trust, which is the sponsor of the school, and from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including the school's documents on safeguarding, the school's view of its own performance and plans for future improvement. In addition, the inspection team examined the school's information on how well students are doing, records relating to teaching, behaviour and attendance and documents used by the leaders to evaluate the school's work.
- Inspectors considered the 140 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, the school's own parent questionnaire responses and additional parent responses including two conversations with parents on the telephone.
- Responses were also considered from 64 staff.
- The inspection was one a number of focused inspection events across a number of schools who are part of the Academies Enterprise Trust. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors met with the principal, governors and a representative from the trust.
- The timing of the inspection meant Year 11 or Year 13 were not in normal lessons, in addition a few Year 12 and Year 10 students were missing from lessons as they were doing examinations.

## Inspection team

Anne Pepper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David New	Additional Inspector
Heather Housden	Additional Inspector
Patricia Gray	Additional Inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Greensward Academy opened in September 2008. It is sponsored by the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) and was the founding school.
- The current principal was appointed as Head of Education in the academy when it opened in 2008 and was appointed as substantive principal in 2012.
- The principal is a National Leader in Education (NLE) for the National College of Teaching and Learning and Greensward Academy is a National Support school. The school is part of the Academies Enterprise Trust Teaching Schools Alliance.
- Almost all students are White British.
- The proportions of disabled students and those who have special educational needs and are supported through school action, school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs are all below average.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium is well below average. This additional funding is given to schools for looked-after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A small number of students undertake part-time work experience.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy has previously entered students early for GCSE examinations in English and mathematics and other qualifications in science.
- As a result of falling rolls in local primary schools, the academy reduced its admission number from 270 in the current Years 8-11, to 240 for the current Year 7.
- The academy is undergoing substantial building work. Many lessons are not being held in their usual accommodation.
- The academy runs a breakfast club for a number of its students.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress made by students in GCSE science, technology and geography and for more-able students in English by ensuring that all teachers:
  - mark students' work consistently well in all subjects
  - check that students always make the necessary improvements to their work, so that it is of consistently high quality.
- Improve teaching to become outstanding by ensuring that all teachers share the good practice that already exists in the academy so that those successful features of teaching are consistently used across all subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students attain well above average results across a range of subjects at the end of Year 11, having entered in Year 7 with average levels of attainment. Achievement in mathematics is outstanding over time; students achieve well above expectations from each starting points.
- Attainment in English is well above average, but the rates of progress in English for more-able students are not outstanding over time. This is because their skills in writing are not as well developed as their reading and communication skills.
- Students have positive attitudes towards learning and do well in history, French, Spanish, drama, music, and physical education. However, students do not do as well in science, geography and technology. The picture for current students in Years 10 and 11 in these subjects is improving.
- GCSE science results have been well below average for the past three years, and far fewer students than nationally have taken at least two GCSE subjects in science. Science is a key subject and these disappointing GCSE results contribute to the view of inspectors that the achievement in the academy is not yet outstanding.
- Students have been entered early for GCSE English, mathematics and some science qualifications. The proportion of students attaining the highest GCSE grades in mathematics is in line with national figures, but below the national figures in English and science.
- The academy has about a quarter of its students entering with above average attainment in Year 7, compared to about a third of students nationally. They make the progress they should in most subjects, with the exception of science. Academy data for current students show they are now making better progress across all subjects.
- Pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding has been used to provide support for targeted groups, and provide financial assistance and additional materials for some students. These students make the progress they should and better progress than similar students nationally. However, the gap in attainment between students eligible for the pupil premium and other students in the academy is nearly two years in English and over a year in mathematics. This gap is narrowing rapidly for current students in the academy.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress in English and mathematics. This is because they receive effective additional support throughout the academy and especially through special provision in Year 7. The academy provides well for all groups of students and is promoting equality of opportunity.
- Good skills in reading, communication and mathematics were evident in students' work across a range of subjects, including mathematical skills in science. Reading is promoted well across the academy and reading skills are developed well in lessons.
- About half of Year 11 stay on into the sixth form. Three quarters of those students follow an A level route and a quarter a work-related path. Across both A level and work-related subjects students make the progress expected. All students who have not already gained a GCSE grade C in English or mathematics are taking the subject in the sixth form. A strength of the sixth form study programme is the effective advice and guidance that students receive. As a result, all go on to further study, employment or training.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teaching for current students in the academy is consistently strong in mathematics, English, history, languages, physical education and a number of other subjects but especially drama.
- As a result of the academy's systematic approach to developing teaching, there is clear evidence of the improvements that have been made over time and in particular since September 2013 in science and geography. There is a strong culture of constant improvement and teachers at all levels are committed to 'Making their Best Better', so that more teaching is outstanding.
- Teaching is strongest in Key Stage 4, where the clarity over examination requirements means that work is suitably challenging. The academy's own records show that teaching is weaker in science and at Key Stage 3. Parents made some well-founded comments about the impact of staffing difficulties leading to a high number of supply teachers in some subjects, but particularly science in Years 7 and 8.
- The academy has improved teaching in the sixth form as recommended in the previous report and students take more responsibility for their own learning both in and out of lessons.
- Almost all lessons are characterised by positive relationships between staff and students and a culture of mutual respect. Teaching engages students well, promoting reading, communication and, where relevant, mathematics across a range of subjects. On a few occasions students were chatty, although still doing their work.
- Writing is not as strong as reading, communication and mathematics. Too many students do not take sufficient pride in their work. Books looked at in lessons and a scrutiny of books for above average Year 7 students showed too much inconsistency in the quality of marking and feedback across a range of subjects.
- The academy's system for lesson planning, with a 'big question' that students know they will be able to answer by the end of the lesson, ensures that learning is relevant. Teachers plan well for different ability groups within the class.
- A strength of teaching is the clarity teachers have about what they expect students to know, understand and be able to do by the end of the lesson. The best practice is not shared widely enough, however, across the academy.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of students is good. The academy is a nurturing community that both students and teachers are proud to be part of. The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students report that they feel safe in and around the site. The approach to safety for the current building work is exemplary and the fact that there is so little negative impact on learning despite the huge scale of the work being carried out is testament to the excellent systems in place.
- Attendance has improved, and for the current year it is above average, having been average for the last two years. The academy's website makes it clear to parents that attendance needs to improve further and its refusal to authorise holidays in term time is beginning to be understood by parents.
- Academy leaders carry out weekly checks on attendance and are reducing the number of

students who are frequently absent. Support for students eligible for the pupil premium to attend breakfast club has led to an improvement in the attendance of this group.

- The attendance of the very small number of students who undertake part-time work experience as part of their Key Stage 4 programme, is regularly checked and their attendance and attitudes are good.
- Surveys the academy has carried out as well as responses to Parent View show parents are positive about safety and that students are happy at the academy.
- Students know about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying. Tutor time and assemblies are used effectively to promote students' personal development. Students know the difference between right and wrong and understand views different from their own. Work with other schools in this country, as well as the 'International School' award, helps them to understand different cultures.
- Students take part in a wide range of other activities including performance and sports and a number become sports leaders. Students feel their views are listened to. Recently students were consulted over changes that could be made to lessons and feel very positive about the changes that have been made in the light of this. Both students and parents are positive about new rules that have been implemented recently over make-up and skirts.
- The approach to behaviour taken by leaders in the academy is seen by students and teachers as simple and effective. Procedures for students to go to different lessons for a period of time are effective and exclusions have fallen over the past few years. The academy provides its own counsellors for students and this has been effective in meeting the social and emotional needs of some students.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because attendance, while improving, is not yet consistently above average. Staffing difficulties have led to a high number of supply teachers in some subjects leading to parents raising some well-founded concerns. Students' attitudes to learning while good, are not outstanding.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The principal leads staff and students so that everyone is committed to achieving their very best. Everyone works to constantly improve. As a result, students enter the academy in Year 7 in line with national averages and by the end of Year 11, they are well above in the headline measure of five A\* to C including English and mathematics.
- Teachers in charge of subjects and year groups perform well as a result of the positive culture within the academy. They feel valued by senior leaders and in turn teachers feel valued by them
- There is a systematic approach to developing teaching within the academy and linked to other schools. Teachers know their targets for improvement and take part in and lead development programmes.
- Leadership in the sixth form is good. There is a variety of academic and work-related courses. Students are required to re-sit GCSE English and mathematics if they have not already gained a grade C or above. Students receive independent advice about future options and so they are well-informed and prepared for their next stage in education, employment or training.

- The academy leaders and particularly the principal have provided effective support to other schools, for example as executive principal at New Rickstones Academy. However, staffing difficulties within the academy as well as meeting the many current national initiatives, have left the academy over-stretched in some areas.
- Academy leaders, while agreeing with inspection findings that some aspects of the academy are not outstanding, have been over-generous in places in their self-evaluation.
- There has been support from the local authority for attendance, and regular meetings to consider the progress the academy is making, particularly in teaching. There has been support from the sponsor for recruitment, the new buildings, setting targets and challenge over how well the academy is doing, as well as very practical support for science. This work, as well as the academy's actions to improve teaching and raise attainment in science and some other subjects, is only showing impact this year.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body uses its understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses to set appropriate priorities. It ensures that leaders take key actions relating to improving teaching and outcomes for students. Governors ensure that finances support these priorities, particularly the substantial commitment to the new buildings. They have been involved in decisions about the spending of the pupil premium and are aware of the impact in terms of good progress. They have led actions to improve communication with parents. Governors have a strong understanding of the quality of teaching and its links to teachers' performance and pay.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135652
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	447020

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1515
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	236
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Hindley
<b>Principal</b>	Deborah Stokes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01702 202571
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