

Chosen Hill School

Brookfield Road, Gloucester, GL3 2PL

Inspection dates 16–17 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The effective leadership of the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and governors has brought about rapid improvement since the last inspection. Teaching and achievement have both improved and are now good.
- After a dip in examination results in 2013 the academy has taken strong action to accelerate the progress of students. Students now achieve very well and GCSE results in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, are above average.
- Attainment overall at the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. This represents good progress from students' starting points.
- Teaching is typically good. Leaders have taken very effective action to improve the quality of teaching.
- Students' behaviour around the academy and at social times is good. They are proud of their academy, and this is evidenced by the lack of litter and absence of graffiti around the academy site.
- Very strong relationships between students and their teachers mean that students demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning. They are keen to do well and achieve good examination results.
- There are a rich variety of extra-curricular activities which very effectively contribute to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good and numbers are increasing. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and outcomes for students are steadily improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers plan activities that challenge and stretch all students to achieve their best.
- Teachers' questioning does not always help students to think deeply about what they are learning or embed their understanding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 35 lessons and in a range of shorter visits to classrooms. Many lessons were jointly observed with a member of the senior leadership team or subject middle leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed the quality of students’ work in a broad range of subjects including English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, the arts and humanities.
- Inspectors visited morning tutor time and observed assemblies. A meeting between the head boy and head girl, and the senior prefects, was also observed.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers, members of the governing body and groups of students from each year group.
- Inspectors looked at a range of academy documentation including the academy’s own review of its work and development plans, records relating to safeguarding and child protection, attendance and behaviour logs, information about students’ achievement, performance management systems and procedures for checking on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors considered the 105 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered the 272 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, the academy’s own survey of the views of parents and four communications from parents received during the inspection.

Inspection team

Caroline Dearden, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Joseph Skivington	Additional Inspector
Marian Prior	Additional Inspector
Timothy Gilson	Additional Inspector
Stephen Rogers	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It has a sixth form.
- Most students are of White British heritage and a minority speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium is lower than average. This is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A very small number of students attend Gloucester and Forest Pupil Referral Unit for additional support for their behaviour.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching to outstanding so that students make rapid and sustained progress by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use their subject knowledge and information from reviewing students' work to structure questions which deepen students' understanding and embed their learning
 - plan learning that is hard enough so that all are stretched and challenged to achieve their best.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Academy leaders and governors have responded effectively to the issues raised at the last inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by students have both rapidly improved.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have taken decisive action to redirect the focus of the academy's work. There is now a strong emphasis on supporting students to achieve high standards in the examinations they take at the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form. Achievement is now good.
- The leadership of teaching is especially strong and underpins the rapid improvement in the overall quality of teaching. Very effective use has been made of training to strengthen teachers' skills and develop their practice. This includes opportunities for teachers to work together and to learn from each other. Being able to work in small groups is appreciated by teachers who enjoy the opportunities this provides to share good practice and innovative teaching strategies.
- Performance management is strong and is used effectively to challenge underperformance and improve the overall quality of teaching.
- The academy's systems for tracking and monitoring students' progress and achievement have been simplified to make the information meaningful and easy to understand. This information has been used very well by academy leaders to judge the quality of teaching. The school's own review of it is consequently thorough and robust. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the academy's strengths and what needs to be done to bring about further improvements.
- There are clear expectations for students' conduct and behaviour which underpin the very strong relationships between students and their teachers and help to foster the academy's inclusive nature and good relations. These high expectations also provide the basis for students' positive attitudes towards learning and make the academy a calm and orderly place in which to learn.
- Department middle leaders are skilled and have very good understanding of their subjects. They use this knowledge to effectively implement interventions when students are identified as underachieving. Very good use has been made of external moderation to check the way in which teachers assess and grade students' work. This means that information about students' progress and achievement is accurate and reliable.
- Pastoral middle leaders work very well to support students to make good progress, attend well and enjoy school. Their care and interest is appreciated by students in all year groups.
- The academy has strengthened the systems used to develop students' literacy skills. This aspect of the academy's work is now led and managed very well. Students read widely and often to enrich their learning during lessons and the academy's library is well stocked and frequently used by students.
- Additional funding is being used effectively to support the achievement of disadvantaged students. Small group and one-to-one support sessions help to accelerate students' progress in English and mathematics. All disadvantaged students have a mentor who meets with them regularly to check progress and to set targets for improving achievement. Disadvantaged students are also encouraged to attend and participate in extra-curricular activities. Where the lack of a computer is identified as a barrier to learning, the school provides computers for students to use at home. The progress of disadvantaged students currently at the academy is improving rapidly.
- The academy promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the taught curriculum and through extra-curricular activities very well. There are many opportunities for students to enjoy sporting, musical and performance activities. The range of trips and visits includes opportunities to visit foreign countries and places of interest within Britain. International students in the sixth form enrich students' understanding and appreciation of different cultures.
- Students are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Assemblies and tutorial programmes provide opportunities for the promotion of equality and for students to appreciate diversity. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. Understanding of democracy is very well supported through canvassing and elections for key posts of responsibility within the school such as those of head boy and head girl. The student council is also effective in representing the views of students to senior leaders.
- The range of subjects on offer meets students' needs and aspirations well. The advice and guidance provided for students at options time and when making choices about future careers or education is good and strengthening. There is an equally strong focus on apprenticeships as on higher education. This means that students are able to consider a broad range of opportunities for when they leave school. Almost all students move on to sustained education, employment or training.
- The academy has worked constructively with the local authority and good use has been made of external support to validate judgements about the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by students.

- The systems for tracking and monitoring students' progress are effective. Information is used by senior and middle leaders as well as teachers to quickly identify any students who are underachieving. Appropriate support is quickly implemented and the proportion of students making good and better progress in English and mathematics is above national levels.
- Students who attend the local pupil referral unit for additional support for their behaviour attend and behave very well. They make good progress because they study the same subjects as their classmates and are frequently successfully reintegrated into the school to take their GCSE examinations.
- Academy leaders use the academy's financial resources to improve the physical environment and to ensure that students are taught by well-qualified and skilled teachers.
- The academy's procedures for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements and are effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors have a range of skills and expertise which they use well to hold the academy's leaders to account for the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by students. They have supported school leaders to refocus the work of the academy and to accelerate the drive for improving examination results. Governors receive detailed reports about the work of the academy from school leaders. They challenge the information provided and ask searching questions to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the information they receive.
 - The recent restructuring of the governing body has streamlined the systems for accountability and ensured that appropriately qualified governors hold key posts. This includes those with responsibility for finance and safeguarding. Consequently, the academy is financially stable and all statutory safeguarding responsibilities are met.
 - Governors know about the quality of teaching. They ensure that performance management rewards good teaching and challenges underperformance. They have good understanding of the Teachers' Standards and how they are used to determine the quality of teaching.
 - Governors monitor the spending of the pupil premium well and know that the gaps between the achievement of those who are disadvantaged and others in the academy are narrowing. There is a clear focus on accelerating the progress of these students.

The behaviour and safety of students are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students are very well behaved when moving about the academy between lessons. At social times, they integrate very well in mixed groups and enjoy each other's company. They are consistently polite and courteous to staff and each other.
- Students are proud of their academy. This is evidenced by the lack of litter and absence of graffiti around the academy site. Students arrive promptly to lessons and almost always have the right equipment.
- Students demonstrate good attitudes towards learning. They are ambitious and keen to achieve well. They follow the 'no hands up' rule when teachers ask questions of them and this allows everyone to have the opportunity to contribute towards learning. Incidents of low-level disruption are very rare.
- Students have a very good understanding of difference and how to work sensitively with those who have additional needs. This contributes very well to the inclusive nature of the academy.
- Leaders have taken very effective action to eliminate permanent exclusions. Partnership work with the local pupil referral unit means that students needing additional support for behaviour receive timely and appropriate intervention. These students study the same subjects as their classmates and are successfully reintegrated into the academy.
- Attendance is good for all groups of students and there is high take-up of extra-curricular activities at lunchtime, after school and during holiday periods.
- Exclusion rates continue to be much lower than nationally.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The arrangements for safeguarding children are robust. This includes procedures for recruiting new staff and for ensuring that the academy site is safe and secure.
- Students feel safe at the academy. This view is endorsed by parents and staff. The academy provides high-quality and meticulous pastoral care. Students know that their teachers care about them and who to approach if they have a problem or concern.
- Students say that bullying is rare, and this view is reflected in the academy's behaviour and exclusion

records. When incidents of bullying do occur, academy staff are swift to deal with them appropriately and well. There is clear recognition that racist behaviour or other forms of prejudice are not tolerated.

- Students have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations including use of the internet and social media. Effective use is made of outside speakers such as police officers and the school nurse to provide information about sexual health, the consequences of substance misuse and potential grooming or sexting through the internet.
- Many students have a clear understanding about what extremism is and how to identify it. Good use is made of external support to address any incidents of extremist views at an individual level. Students are curious about the wider world and some students would like more opportunities to learn about the causes of extremism and radicalisation. Academy leaders have recognised this and have made arrangements for world politics to be studied in Year 10 from next year.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and the majority is now at least good in all subjects. There are examples of outstanding practice, and good use is being made of cross-curricular work to share this effective practice and to develop innovative teaching strategies.
- Relationships between teachers and students are a strength of the academy. Students trust their teachers, and know that they have high expectations of them and want them to achieve well. This means that students have positive attitudes towards learning and creates a purposeful learning environment during lessons.
- Teachers know that they are accountable for the standards achieved by students. They make good use of assessment to plan engaging lessons so that students are interested in what they are learning.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge which they use well to plan work that builds on what students already know. However, not all teachers make sure that work is always hard enough for students in each class, and this can mean that not all students are consistently stretched and challenged to achieve their best.
- Teachers use effective questioning to encourage students to think for themselves and to make links in their learning. However, not all questioning helps students to deepen their understanding or embed their learning, and this can slow progress.
- The quality of marking has been improved since the last inspection and is now strong. Advice given to students about how to improve their work is well thought out and students are regularly provided with opportunities to respond to their teachers' feedback.
- The teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics is well embedded across the school. Students develop the skills they need to make good progress across all subjects and to be able to understand and answer examination questions.
- Teaching assistants are skilfully deployed to make a very strong contribution towards the learning and progress of those students who need additional support.

The achievement of students

is good

- Students enter the academy in Year 7 with standards that are above average. In 2014, the proportion gaining five or more GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics was above the national average. Information provided by the academy indicates that this will be sustained for those currently on roll.
- In 2014, students made very good progress in English and mathematics. Academy information shows that students currently on roll are on track to attain above average standards in English and mathematics.
- In 2014, disadvantaged students progressed better than other students nationally in English and mathematics. On average, they were half a GCSE grade behind in both English and mathematics, and gaps had narrowed. When compared to students in the school, they were one grade behind in English and mathematics. These students make good progress, and progress is accelerating for them.
- The academy uses the pupil premium funding effectively to provide one-to-one tuition and small-group sessions in English and mathematics. Funding is also used to provide resources for these students so that they are able to access learning effectively. The gaps between the progress and achievement of disadvantaged students and that of their classmates are narrowing.
- The most able-students make good progress across a range of subjects. Teachers routinely provide opportunities for these students to attempt work at the highest levels. This is leading to improved results

for these students.

- The academy quickly identifies students who enter in Year 7 with low levels of literacy and numeracy and who are eligible for the 'catch-up' premium. Effective strategies help these students develop their reading competencies and confidence in mathematics. Most work securely within Level 4 by the end of Year 7. Those who need further help receive specialist teaching in Year 8 and this ensures that they are well placed to make their option choices in Year 9.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are supported very well. Teaching assistants provide carefully structured help and guidance, which means that these students routinely try to work things out for themselves, and this is helping them to make good progress and achieve well. The newly appointed leader of special educational needs has introduced a range of strategies to accelerate the progress of these students. Students with disabilities and special educational needs achieve much higher standards than similar students nationally.
- The academy does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- Students attending the local pupil referral unit make good progress to achieve well in a range of subjects including English and mathematics.

The sixth form provision is good

- The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Leaders have been very successful in responding to the issues raised in the last inspection. They have skilfully developed the quality of teaching and there is a consistent drive to promote high expectations and aspirations for all. Consequently, the numbers in the sixth form are increasing and retention from Year 12 to Year 13 has improved.
- Attainment on entry to the sixth form is below that found nationally. Students are taught well and make good progress. As a result, they leave with attainment overall that is in line with the national average. Information provided by the academy indicates an improving trend in outcomes with increasing proportions of students likely to achieve the highest grades at A and AS level.
- The sixth form curriculum is largely academic. There are a few vocational courses on offer. Students who need to retake their GCSE examinations in English and mathematics are well supported to do so.
- Teachers have very strong subject knowledge and this ensures that students are supported to make good progress. All teachers have high expectations and plan interesting activities to stretch and deepen students' understanding. All encourage students to work independently and build the resilience they need to be confident learners.
- The behaviour of sixth form students is excellent. They attend regularly and are punctual to lessons and self-directed study periods. Sixth form students are exceptional role models for younger students; they actively take on roles of responsibility and routinely use their social time to help and support others. Sixth form students feel safe and the arrangements for registering their attendance ensure that they are always accounted for.
- Students receive high-quality support and guidance when preparing for the next steps in their education, employment or training. Many secure places at university and the number moving on to highly selective universities is increasing. Those who wish to enter employment through apprenticeships are also very effectively supported.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. It is not outstanding because results from A- and AS-level examinations are not yet as high as they could be.

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	462519

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	1,402
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Dale
Headteacher	Sue Turner
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 May 2014
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