

Everest Community Academy

Oxford Way, Basingstoke, RG24 9UP

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Recent changes to strengthen and sharpen leadership and management at all levels have not yet had time to fully impact on students' achievement.
- Middle leaders are not all consistently focused on school improvement in their areas of responsibility.
- Governors have not been quick enough to challenge underperformance. In the past, funding for disadvantaged students has not been spent fully effectively.
- Behaviour requires improvement because some students do not show consistent engagement in their lessons or good attitudes towards their learning.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good and activities do not always provide students, especially disadvantaged and more able students, with enough support and challenge. Sometimes, teaching assistants are not clear about their role in supporting learning.
- Homework does not support learning beyond the classroom well enough.
- Marking is inconsistent in all years and feedback does not always help students to understand what they need to do to improve.
- The proportion of students who gain five good passes at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has been well below the national average. Results in 2014 did not meet government floor targets.

The school has the following strengths

- The determined leadership of the recently appointed Principal, combined with the involvement of the Regional Director of the Academies Enterprise Trust, is effective in generating change.
- Senior leaders and managers are bringing about rapid improvements in teaching, behaviour and achievement, particularly in Key Stage 4. The academy has good capacity to continue to improve.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, with underperformance rigorously addressed through professional development programmes. The number of lessons when students' learning was poor has dramatically reduced.
- Staff's concern for the welfare and well-being of students is a real strength. Students confirm they are looked after and feel safe in academy.
- Bullying is rare and students say they know staff deal with it swiftly. All students have a very good awareness of different kinds of bullying.
- Attendance has risen rapidly, so that it now matches the national average. Persistent absence rates continue to fall. The number of permanent and fixed term exclusions is falling and is now close to average.
- Support for literacy, including reading regularly, is strong in all years. It is helping students to make better progress in all their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- At the time of the inspection, Year 10 students were off site on work experience and Year 11 students were off site because they had completed their GCSE examinations. The normal timetable had been suspended and Key Stage 3 students were attending a series of whole-year-group sessions as part of the academy's enrichment week.
- Inspectors undertook 18 observations of these sessions, including nine sessions which were jointly observed with senior members of staff. Observations were supplemented by walks to observe learning focusing on teaching and behaviour and to discuss students' work with them.
- Inspectors met with students from all year groups in addition to groups of students with special educational needs, high attaining students and disadvantaged students. Further discussions took place informally with students during the day.
- Inspectors looked at the academy's website and analysed documents including school policies, safeguarding documentation, governors' minutes, and lesson observations. They also looked at procedures and records for safeguarding, child protection, behaviour, attendance and exclusions.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work across a range of students' books and folders in English, mathematics, science and humanities to evaluate students' attainment, progress and assessment.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior leaders and middle managers, and with two members of the governing body and the Regional Director of the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- The views of 62 parents from the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, along with questionnaires collected and collated by the academy. Inspectors also received 45 questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

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Full report

Information about this school

- The Everest Community Academy is a mixed, smaller than average, 11–16 academy sponsored by the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET). At the time of the inspection, there were 586 students on roll.
- Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is in line with the national average, as is the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is above the national average. Pupil premium is additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children.
- A small minority of Year 7 students, who did not attain Level 4 in either English or mathematics at the end of primary school, are eligible for catch-up funding.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above the national average. Most of these students have behaviour or learning difficulties.
- A small number of students are educated elsewhere, at the Basingstoke College of Technology and the Ashwood Academy in Basingstoke.
- The academy has been affected by a high turnover of teachers, although staffing is now more stable. The Principal took up post in September 2014 and many senior leaders and middle leaders are relatively new to their roles.
- In 2014, the academy did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11. The academy entered a small number of students early for their mathematics examination in 2014 and their English examination in 2015.
- The academy has achieved the Investors in People Gold Award, the Artsmark Silver Award and the Healthy School Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good in order to ensure good progress for all groups of students, by:
 - making effective use of assessment information and matching work precisely to the needs and abilities of groups of students so that they all make good progress
 - having high expectations of what students can produce in their work and making sure that the most able students and disadvantaged students quickly engage with challenging tasks
 - setting regular homework that gives students relevant and meaningful tasks to consolidate and improve their understanding
 - developing engagement in lessons so that all students, particularly low-attaining boys, show positive attitudes to their learning
 - making sure that all teaching assistants have a good understanding of their role in supporting learning in the classroom
 - providing students with clear advice on how they can improve their work, and ensuring that teachers check that students have acted on the advice they are given.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching is consistently good across all subjects and within all subjects
 - all middle leaders are empowered to take a greater responsibility for school improvement
 - subject leaders check the teaching in their areas to ensure that it is at least good
 - governors intensify their challenge of underperformance across the academy
 - additional government funding to support disadvantaged students is used effectively to improve these students' progress in English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement as the progress which students make is not as rapid as it should be. There continues to be a gap in the progress of disadvantaged students compared to their peers, although leaders predict this gap to be reduced in 2015.
- The academy acknowledges that work is still required to ensure that all middle leaders are empowered to take a greater responsibility for their areas. Work is underway to support their professional development, develop their influence and share good practice.
- Nevertheless, the Principal and senior staff have worked tirelessly to address the underperformance highlighted in the 2014 results. Shortfalls have spurred the academy to refocus its priorities, improve behaviour, raise the quality of teaching and make better use of data.
- All leaders are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the academy and mindful of what needs to be done to rapidly improve. Actions are carefully prioritised and concisely focused on addressing areas for improvement.
- The academy's self-evaluation reflects the significant improvements made over the short period of time since the Principal's appointment. The academy's work is carefully checked, regularly, by the trust to ensure that actions are either successful or adjusted to ensure greater impact.
- Procedures and systems for monitoring the quality of teaching are strong and accurate, and underperformance is quickly addressed through the Accelerated Teaching Programme and the Support for Teaching and Learning Programme. These programmes successfully provide teachers with support to improve their teaching.
- The success of the programmes is evident in the dramatic and rapid reduction of lessons when learning was poor, based on leaders' observations over the last year. There has also been an increasing proportion of lessons in which learning was evaluated as being outstanding.
- The academy offers a well-considered programme of professional development for all staff, including middle leaders. Training is carefully mapped and linked to appraisal and performance management. Good practice is shared across the academy.
- In particular, the induction of newly qualified teachers is a strength and it contributes towards a steady progression of high quality staff into the academy. The academy has recently been commended for its work in developing a strong network of newly qualified teachers, and for the support it offers to local schools.
- The extensive curriculum is broad, balanced and compliant. It is well matched to the abilities and interests of students. Students are prepared well for life in modern Britain. A module on 'Britishness' tackles stereotypes and aids students' understanding of tolerance and respect.
- Good use has been made of the partnership with police officers from the local 'Prevent' team to teach students about extremism and radicalisation. The successful religious studies lessons support students in their understanding of different faiths and cultures and how these contribute to enriching the community.
- A good range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences is supported through the Global Learning Programme, which encourages global citizenship, and the Educate and Celebrate Programme supporting students' understanding of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues. The school is a very cohesive community and promotes equality of opportunity and fosters good relationships well.
- Strategies such as highlighting key vocabulary, the use of learning displays and the Accelerated Reading Programme are positively contributing to students' literacy skills. Numeracy is supported across the curriculum, although there are inconsistencies. Some subjects deliver this more effectively than others. Students receive good support on career choices and work experience placements.
- Following an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium, funding is now costed more carefully and spent on small group tuition, peer mentoring and the Accelerated Reading Programme which supports and encourages the development of students' literacy skills.
- The academy works extensively with a range of partners including partner primary schools. The academy is host to initial teacher training. It is a community partner with a number of associations, including a dance troupe, an opera group, a chess club and an over 50s club. It has also acted as a learning hub for neighbouring schools and academies focused on motivation, behaviour, teaching and learning.
- The academy has a range of strategies for engaging with parents and increasing their involvement in the life of the school. The most recent response from Parent View confirms that parents have more confidence in the academy.
- The academy receives considerable assistance from the Academies Enterprise Trust, who has brokered

support for leaders and managers across the school. The regular involvement of the Regional Director of the Academies Enterprise Trust has contributed considerably to the academy's ongoing improvement.

- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements. All safeguarding requirements are met, with very good attention to detail along with high expectations of ensuring that all staff are trained in child protection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - While governors are committed to the academy, they are only just beginning to hold senior leaders to account for all aspects of the academy's performance. They have a growing awareness of the academy and monitor the work of the academy through visits, regular feedback and the availability of data.
 - The use of the pupil premium funding is now monitored better by governors and they can describe the support offered to disadvantaged students. However, they are less clear about the impact the funding is having on closing gaps in achievement between disadvantaged students and their peers.
 - Governors know that achievement is improving because the quality of teaching is getting better. They have supported the Principal when action has been needed to eradicate inadequate teaching. They have a secure understanding of the link between teachers' pay and the quality of teaching.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Behaviour is not good because students are still not consistently fully engaged in their lessons. The academy has identified a group of students, specifically lower-attaining boys, who are being targeted in terms of their behaviour and engagement. The behaviour of students attending alternative courses off site is improving as a result of well-considered placements.
- Much work has been done to improve behaviour and ensure that students adopt positive attitudes towards their studies. Improvements since September are reflected in a fall in call outs for support, the number of detentions and the number of students put into isolation.
- Behaviour around the academy site is calm and orderly. Students are polite and courteous towards each other as well as to staff and visitors. They behaved well whilst queuing for lunch and it was notable that students showed pride in their academy by the lack of litter left in communal areas afterwards.
- The number of permanent exclusions and fixed term exclusions is falling following the academy's success in addressing this issue. Instances of low-level disruption are well managed using the academy's recently introduced policies and procedures.
- Students say that behaviour is now much better and that behaviour seen during the inspection was typical of behaviour over time. Feedback from teachers and other staff at the academy confirms this. Parents, students and staff agree that further improvement is required and that behaviour is not yet good.
- Attendance rates are rising and persistent absenteeism reducing. There are rigorous systems to monitor attendance and it is now in line with the national average. Students are punctual to school and to lessons.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students know what to do if they have any concerns. They say that they feel safe and that they are well supported by staff. Child protection procedures are understood and supported through regular training.
- Incidents of bullying and racism are rare, but dealt with very effectively when they do occur. Students have a very good awareness of different kinds of bullying including cyber, racist and homophobic bullying. Health and safety arrangements are well considered.
- Assemblies, tutor time and the personal, social, health and economic programme make sure that students have opportunities to develop their awareness of different cultures and develop their understanding of British values of citizenship, tolerance and respect.
- Staff regularly check the attendance, safety and welfare of students attending alternative courses off site.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because teaching over time has not been consistently good enough to enable students to make good progress and achieve well. In particular, disadvantaged students have not historically made progress similar to their peers.
- Engagement is inconsistent and the most able learners are not always sufficiently stretched and challenged, while disadvantaged students sometimes find it hard to access tasks and activities in a way

that supports them to make good progress.

- However, teaching across most subjects is now good, with many examples of teaching which fully engages students. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics activity, students were challenged to create a pyramid from a piece of card, which led to considerable learning about angles, symmetry and properties of solids.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very positive. Most teachers have developed highly effective behaviour protocols which students and staff say have improved behaviour considerably this year.
- Teaching is not always well planned, which means that sometimes time is wasted and students are slow to start their learning. However, this is not always the case and, in the best examples, teachers have a good command of the class, ensure learning moves at a good pace and maintain students' attention.
- Most teaching assistants have a good understanding of their role in lessons to support learning, with many good examples of effective intervention seen. However, there are occasions where teaching assistants are unclear about their role so students, especially boys, were not as well supported as they might be.
- Teachers promote students' literacy well across many subjects, focusing on correct technical language and checking on spelling and the use of punctuation and grammar. Teachers actively encourage reading, but their promotion of students' numeracy skills is relatively new.
- Feedback and marking are inconsistent across the academy. In the majority of books seen there was evidence of careful marking, with clear strengths and areas for development identified. In some books, however, there was a substantial amount of work which had not been marked.
- In a small number of books, unmarked work meant that errors and misconceptions were not addressed and students were not helped to understand what they needed to do to improve. In the best examples, students respond to teachers' marking and teachers follow this up, thus developing students' learning and supporting their progress.
- The setting of high quality homework is inconsistent across subjects and students' views support this. In the best examples, homework was well considered to aid understanding, reinforce work and support research skills, but homework is not always meaningful or relevant.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of students requires improvement. Students join the academy with attainment which is well below national averages. In 2014, the proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, did not meet government floor targets.
- The academy has identified a small, but significant, number of students who were educated off site in the past whose poor GCSE results were counted towards the academy's performance. The academy is now much better focused and proactive about the progress and achievement of these students and about selecting the best off site education to suit their needs.
- In the 2014 GCSE examinations, disadvantaged students were significantly behind other students nationally and in the academy. Students who were educated off site and students not completing examinations have had a considerable impact on the academy's results.
- In English, disadvantaged students were one GCSE grade behind other students in the academy and one grade behind other students nationally. In mathematics, they were one grade behind other students and two grades behind students nationally. However, the academy's current data show an improving picture in all year groups and inspection evidence confirms that gaps are narrowing rapidly.
- The academy's tracking of students' attainment, early entry results in English and more rigorous monitoring procedures suggest that achievement will improve significantly in 2015. Underachievement has been addressed in 2015, so that the proportion of students making and exceeding expected progress now compares favourably with national data, although it is not so strong in mathematics.
- Students enter the academy with very low levels of literacy which are supported by Year 7 catch-up funding and addressed through focused support in English lessons and other subjects. Data show that these students gained an average of two years on their reading age in their first year at the academy. Students' numeracy skills are suitably developed in mathematics, but not yet actively promoted in other subjects enough.
- The achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs is similar to their peers, with four out of five of them making the expected progress in the recent GCSE English examination. There is no difference in the performance of students from different ethnic groups and their peers.
- The most able students make good progress in English, but their performance is not so strong in

mathematics.

- School data, lesson observations and work samples carried out by inspectors suggest that achievement in English and mathematics will meet national targets in 2015. Attainment is now in line with national averages and students' progress is likely to be in line with national averages. Predictions for Year 10 students show a further improvement, so that rising achievement is likely to be sustained.
- The academy entered a small number of students early for GCSE English and mathematics. Entries are only made when students are ready and the small number of students not meeting expectations are re-entered so this does not have any adverse effect on their success.

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	137113
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	462437

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	586
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Green
Principal	Nick Price
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 July 2013
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