

The New Forest Academy

Long Lane, Holbury, Hampshire SO45 2PA

Inspection dates

19–20 January 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' achievements in mathematics have been significantly below expectations for some time. Standards are currently improving securely because of much better teaching but are not yet good.
- Some teaching does not promote good learning for the most-able pupils. This means that too few pupils achieve the highest grades at GCSE. Opportunities to offer all pupils significant intellectual challenge are sometimes missed.
- Teaching has not yet strongly developed pupils' confidence in learning. A reluctance to speak up in lessons and to challenge their own and others' grasp of key ideas through questioning are preventing some pupils from making very rapid progress.
- Not all planning by teachers aims to meet the particular needs of different groups of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The determined and very good leadership provided by the Principal has transformed the culture here. Many pupils are now proud to be members of this academy and show great loyalty to it.
- The good leadership given to the academy by the Principal and her senior staff is driving improvements in all aspects of the academy's work strongly.
- Outcomes are improving securely in nearly all subjects because of the success of the work to improve teaching.
- Pupils are very well cared for. Systems to ensure their safety operate very well. There is a strong emphasis on pupils' welfare throughout the academy.
- The vast majority of pupils conduct themselves well around the site at break and lunchtimes and in lessons. They appreciate the better teaching and they are enjoying making better progress.
- Good and productive links between the academy and other schools have been made. These enable leaders to be outward-looking and open to new ideas.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the academy no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, by:
 - offering all pupils consistently high levels of challenge to capitalise on and develop their emerging love of learning
 - adapting resources and learning strategies so that the needs of different groups of pupils are met at key points in lessons so that different groups are appropriately supported and challenged
 - building in opportunities in lesson planning for pupils to make rapid progress, especially the most able
 - developing greater confidence and resilience in pupils so that they can contribute more to lessons and learning is pacier and more secure.

- Improve outcomes for pupils in mathematics, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop problem-solving skills to make use of prior learning and make connections across topics
 - developing pupils' skills of mathematical reasoning so that they can explain their ideas and justify their responses verbally and in writing more clearly and usefully
 - ensuring that teachers check that pupils have a secure grasp of key ideas at each stage of a lesson before moving on.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The Principal has redefined the purpose and nature of the academy's work over the last two years. She has established a culture which emphasises learning, the celebration of success and teamwork. Pupils and staff are delighted with these changes and now speak very positively about the academy. Around nine out of ten parents who responded to Parent View felt that the academy is well led and managed and a very high proportion would now recommend the academy to other parents.
- The senior team have clear and well understood roles and responsibilities. Together, they exercise close oversight of all aspects of the academy's work. They prioritise the quality of teaching and the welfare of pupils in all that they do and this is driving improvements in outcomes for pupils.
- Middle leaders support this work well. Not all are yet strongly supporting the development of outstanding teaching and learning in their subject areas but they have a clear understanding of their roles and work successfully under the guidance of senior staff.
- Pupil support systems are well organised and effective. A senior member of staff meets frequently with progress leaders for each key stage and together they scrutinise a wide range of information including the latest data on attendance, behaviour and punctuality. Priorities are identified and acted on immediately. Each meeting involves a very useful focus on the impact of their work.
- The academy evaluates the quality of all aspects of its work accurately. Its self-evaluation judgements match the overall inspection outcomes very closely. Development planning supports improvements strongly because it is focused on teaching and learning and identifies the best responses to the need to improve them by the most appropriate staff and in a timely way. The development plan provides a good basis for the frequent and detailed review of the work of the academy undertaken by senior staff and the management board.
- The quality of teaching is led and managed very well. A wide range of strategies is used to support and challenge individuals and subject areas to promote quicker and more secure learning. Training is frequent and relevant, and many middle leaders make good contributions. Staff are appreciative of its quality and its impact is apparent in many classrooms. Senior staff visit lessons often and make accurate and perceptive judgements of the quality of learning and the impact of teaching.
- The curriculum is maintained as broad and balanced despite pupil numbers having fallen recently and the associated budgetary pressures. Good decisions are made about pupils' courses in Key Stage 4 based on their interests, talents and likely future educational and employment needs. The academy's website does not provide detailed information for parents about what their child is learning in each subject in each year but there are plans in place to remedy this.
- Pupils receive good advice and guidance about their education, training and employment opportunities beyond 16. Pupils in Key Stage 4 have a good understanding of apprenticeships because the academy hosts an annual three-day event on this career route, supported by ExxonMobil. Colleges are invited to speak to pupils about the range of courses on offer and many pupils attend local careers fairs. Employability skills and an understanding of the world of work are highlighted appropriately in both key stages.
- The academy promotes fundamental British values in a coherent and well-organised way through its assembly rotas, the use of tutor time and through specific subjects in each key stage. As a consequence, pupils demonstrate a good awareness of issues such as how their individual liberty is exercised within the rule of law, what being part of a modern democracy means and how diversity is celebrated. There are no plans in place yet to evaluate the impact of this work, however.
- The academy promotes equality of opportunities very successfully. Senior staff and middle leaders monitor the progress of all groups of pupils and intervene quickly if necessary to ensure that all can succeed. An appreciation of diversity is promoted strongly. Pupils told inspectors that they value staff explaining in assemblies and in various subjects how differences such as those in social backgrounds, ethnic heritage and sexual orientation are to be understood, celebrated and valued.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted well. There are ample opportunities to discuss religious and moral issues in religious education and English lessons. There are also many good opportunities to be involved in the performing arts: several pupils sang in a performance of *The Mary Rose* at the Royal Albert Hall before Christmas and there was also a very successful performance of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. A team from the academy recently won the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Challenge in Winchester. Pupils made a particularly touching

gesture of support to the people of France recently, after the terrorist attacks in Paris, by writing to the President. Many were moved by the warmth of the reply they received.

- Good use is made of the pupil premium, extra money received by the academy to promote the achievement of pupils who may otherwise be disadvantaged. There is a wide range of whole-school strategies in place, details of which are provided for parents on the academy's website. Teachers show a keen awareness of pupils who are disadvantaged and focus specially on their learning, giving extra support to help them to catch up. Gaps in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and others are closing as a result. The Year 7 catch-up premium is also used well to support the needs of younger pupils who have not achieved at the expected level by the end of Key Stage 2. Provision is well organised and pupils make good gains in their learning.
- The sponsor, Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), has provided wide-ranging and very effective support for the work of the academy. An experienced Executive Principal shared some aspects of its leadership and management for a time after the previous inspection, but this support is no longer needed and has ceased. Advisers from AET have given valuable support in English and mathematics to improve teaching and learning and to ensure that assessments are accurate. Recent review visits to scrutinise the success of the academy's work have included an interim visit by the Chair of the Management Board, who is also AET's Director of Challenge and Intervention, and a review of provision for careers advice and guidance. These provided useful feedback to the academy. This support is coordinated very well by the Principal.
- Senior staff are very outward-looking and some useful relationships with other schools have been established. The academy works closely with The Romsey School in mathematics and Ringwood School, a national teaching academy, in a range of subjects including benefiting from the support of a specialist leader in education in mathematics. Useful links have also developed with an AET academy in Bristol, and an academy in Dorset. There is very little direct involvement with the local authority.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is exercised by the management board. Its members have a range of relevant and useful skills and experiences, some as senior leaders in schools.
 - They are very knowledgeable about the work of the academy because they visit frequently and scrutinise regular reports produced by the Principal and senior team and objective assessments of its work which are commissioned. They know about the current strengths and development needs of teaching and demonstrate very good insight into its impact on the quality of learning and outcomes for pupils. This means that they are able to scrutinise decisions over pay progression, and other aspects of the management of performance, with rigour and reliability.
 - Members are currently considering how to involve parents more broadly in the strategic direction of the academy. They are also maintaining a close oversight on the academy's budget deficit and managing its recovery successfully. Real improvements to the quality of the site have been made recently, despite this deficit, including the refurbished hall and the new bistro.
 - The management board provides appropriately high levels of challenge and support to the Principal and exercises very good strategic oversight of the academy.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Systems to ensure that all appropriate checks are undertaken on anyone who works with pupils are operated with appropriate rigour. Academy staff and members of the management board are well trained and well informed about all aspects of safeguarding, including 'Prevent', part of the government's strategy to stop people developing extremist views or becoming radicalised. A strong culture of care and support for pupils helps to ensure their safety and well-being.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teachers have developed and are using a wider range of appropriate skills since the previous inspection. However, these skills are not yet developed well enough to drive good progress for all groups of pupils.
- Many teachers' subject knowledge is good and they often convey key ideas clearly and logically. Pupils commented to inspectors how much they appreciate this and how this generates better learning than has been the case previously.
- Nearly all teachers now aim to meet the particular learning needs of individuals and groups of pupils. Good questioning skills are used by some to probe pupils' understanding and ensure that key ideas are understood. Sometimes work is well adapted to suit the needs of the most able pupils and to ensure that those who may struggle are given the chance to succeed. There is good practice in science and English.

However, this is not yet done reliably across the academy.

- Feedback in pupils' books is provided in a common format across the academy and this helps pupils to understand its significance and importance. However, too often pupils' responses are not detailed or insightful enough to support better learning and this is not picked up by teachers consistently well. Homework is usually set in accordance with the academy's policy.
- When given opportunity to discuss and debate ideas, many pupils have the capacity to respond well and learning can become exciting and fun. For example, in a history lesson observed pupils were presenting their own views on the nature of different sources of evidence and enjoyed the challenge the teacher introduced by changing the context of the evidence part-way through. Pupils gave some insightful and interesting responses and learning was pacy and secure because so much had been asked of them. Too few lessons have the requirement for deep thinking built into their planning. However, when this is the case, a lack of intellectual challenge makes for secure rather than rapid learning. This sometimes compromises the capacity of more-able pupils to achieve high grades.
- Teaching is now capitalising successfully on the inherent willingness of pupils to learn. However, some pupils still show a reluctance to rise wholeheartedly to challenges, to be prepared to make mistakes and to contribute thoughts and questions of their own. Teachers have not yet put in place a range of successful strategies to develop more confidence in pupils to address this.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel very safe in the academy. They say that bullying is very rare; when there are relationship problems, staff are supportive and problems are often addressed quickly and successfully.
- Pupils' leadership skills are developed well through various 'pupil voice' activities and opportunities to take part in community work. Pupils who study BTEC sport recently gave up their free time to help to coach primary school pupils in athletics and sports captains organise teams for the academy's inter-house activities.
- Overall attendance has improved over the last two years and is now around the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has diminished as a result of a number of successful strategies to get them back into classrooms and enjoying their time here. Pupils usually arrive punctually in the mornings but a few arrive after lessons have started during the day.
- Pupils enjoy being part of an academy that has been improving rapidly over the last year, and they show value for the commitment and dedication to their welfare and learning demonstrated by staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show great respect for the site and its resources. They particularly value the new bistro area and the opportunity it gives them to socialise and enjoy the food and snacks on offer. There is occasional boisterous behaviour in corridors and on stairs as pupils move from one lesson to another, but even this is generally good-natured.
- Pupils are usually quiet and attentive in lessons. They demonstrate a willingness to learn and many value what they quite rightly judge to be a much better, and more consistent, quality of teaching across the academy over the last two years. There is, however, a reluctance to speak up in class discussions, even when individual support and questioning has demonstrated that there is a high likelihood of the contribution being a good one. This lack of confidence is more an echo of how things were rather than the current happier and more productive working relationships evident in the academy. However, the evident reluctance to make mistakes reduces the likelihood of learning being stimulating and exciting.
- Low-level disruption to learning is rare and is nearly always associated with teaching that fails to maintain pupils' interest. Teachers use the academy's systems to respond to any shortfalls in expectations around conduct well and, in the majority of cases, successfully. Occasional serious incidents of poor behaviour are responded to quickly and effectively and, according to pupils, fairly. Rates of exclusions are slightly above average but this is linked to the enforcement of high standards and there are indications of the success of this sanction.

Outcomes for pupils

requires improvement

- Standards are rising securely in nearly all subjects as a result of better teaching and a better culture of learning in the academy. Current achievement is much better than published data based on 2015 examination results suggest, but is not yet good.
- The progress pupils make in mathematics is now much better than at the time of the last inspection. Learning is now secure and pupils are beginning to fill-in gaps in their understanding and knowledge due to previously poor teaching. This is because teaching is now well organised and presents a clear and logical view of mathematics. However, pupils are not yet given enough opportunities for problem solving. Even when this happens, they are not always required to think ideas through to their conclusion. This means that their capacity to reason mathematically is still under-developed. Many tackle the work set successfully and enjoy doing so, but few are gaining deep insights into how ideas covered in different branches of mathematics fit together. As a consequence, many pupils still lack fluency in the expression of their mathematical reasoning.
- Pupils' learning in English remains a strength in the academy. Outcomes in 2015 were disappointing but the department has undertaken a thorough review of why this happened and is currently promoting good levels of challenge and supporting pupils to make good progress. In one Year 8 lesson observed, pupils were demonstrating high levels of empathy and great clarity of expression around the experiences of soldiers in the First World War, having analysed casualty rates.
- Much of the learning in science is good. Lessons are appropriately demanding and interesting. Good models are presented to help pupils to understand complex ideas, as in one lesson on photosynthesis observed, and pupils use them thoughtfully and successfully.
- Pupils' progress in all other subjects is now at least secure, with particular strengths emerging, or being maintained, for example in physical education and drama.
- The most-able pupils make less progress on average than others. This is because they are not presented often enough with work which has been designed to suit their specific needs and therefore be sufficiently demanding. As a consequence, the proportion of GCSE grades at A and A* is not high enough.
- Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs have benefited from the thorough review undertaken of this aspect of the academy's work last year. Enhanced provision for them and a better understanding of the nature of their learning needs together with improvements in teaching mean that they currently learn as well as others. However, many pupils with additional needs do not yet make good or outstanding progress because the work is not always very well adapted to their needs.
- The gaps between outcomes for pupils eligible for the pupil premium and others have been closing for some years and continue to do so. The average differences in the achievements of disadvantaged pupils and others in the academy in GCSE mathematics and English in 2015 were just over half a grade in each. The academy monitors the progress of disadvantaged pupils with appropriately high levels of attention and care. Good academy-wide strategies ensure that anything that stands in the way of their learning is tackled. However, not all teaching adopts enough highly effective subject-specific strategies to ensure that the learning made by these pupils is accelerated strongly to make up for their previously slower progress.
- Pupils who did not achieve at least Level 4 at Key Stage 2 in Reading, writing or mathematics benefit from extra support funded by the Year 7 catch-up premium. Nearly all achieved significantly higher standards in English in their first year in the academy but only around half did so in mathematics. All continue to benefit from extra support outside lessons and from dedicated teaching assistant support in lessons and the majority are more confident in their basic skills by the end of Year 8.

School details

Unique reference number	138585
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10007993

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

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	376
Appropriate authority	Management Board
Chair	Beverley Perin
Principal	Karen Godsall
Telephone number	02380 891192
Website	www.newforestacademy.org
Email address	schooladmin@newforestacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2013

Information about this school

- The New Forest Academy is a smaller than average-size academy whose sponsor is the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET).
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is near the national average. Some pupils are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is near the national average.
- The academy serves a community with relatively little ethnic or cultural diversity.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standard which sets minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The academy provided 16–19 study programmes until recently but has stopped recruiting into Year 12. There are currently no learners in Years 12 or 13.
- The academy works closely with The Romsey School and Ringwood School, a national teaching academy. No pupils are educated elsewhere for part of the week in alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection began as the fifth monitoring visit in connection with the academy being subject to special measures. It was deemed a section 5 inspection at the end of the first day.
- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, ten jointly with senior staff, involving the work of nearly all teachers.
- Inspectors met with the Principal and other senior staff, representatives of the management board which exercises governance of the academy, AET's regional director for education, other staff and groups of pupils both formally and informally. There was also a telephone conversation with the Chair of the Management Board.
- The academy's development planning, self-evaluation documents, policies and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.
- Inspectors took into account the 51 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Alan Taylor-Bennett, lead inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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