

Isle of Portland Aldridge Community Academy

Maritime House, Southwell Park, Portland, Dorset DT5 2NA

Inspection dates

29–30 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The achievement of pupils over time has been significantly below average in a range of subjects throughout the school.
- Too many teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils, particularly in the secondary phase. The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not sufficiently challenged to achieve their potential.
- Leaders do not know if additional funding is being used to best effect to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up.
- There is insufficient strategic oversight of the early years. Consequently, the quality of provision is inconsistent across the two academy campuses.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of students in the sixth form is not sufficiently well developed.
- Governors have failed to challenge leaders over the achievement of pupils. Consequently, achievement has been allowed to decline.
- Senior leaders have not received adequate support from the academy sponsors to enable them to improve teaching and learning, and raise achievement.
- Too many teachers are failing to set work that is matched to the needs of pupils. Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not receive necessary support.
- Pupils' absence and exclusions are too high.
- Middle leaders are not holding teachers to account for the behaviour and progress of pupils.
- The relationship between school representatives and parents is poor because leaders have not communicated effectively with parents about the many changes that have been introduced.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal, supported by the interim executive principal of another multi-academy trust, is taking decisive action to improve the school.
- The conduct of pupils around the school site is improving.
- Year 1 pupils' achievement in phonics is rising because of better-quality teaching.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - securing appropriate support from a multi-academy trust to safeguard the school's future
 - strengthening senior and middle leadership, including key roles such as the special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding officer
 - clarifying the role and remit of the governing body
 - ensuring that the principal has the support and capacity that will enable her to do her job effectively
 - ensuring that improvement planning fully addresses weaknesses and is rigorously monitored
 - establishing better relationships with parents
 - ensuring that there is sufficient strategic oversight of the early years to promote consistently good-quality provision across campuses.
- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement by ensuring that:
 - work continues to develop a broad and balanced curriculum best suited to pupils
 - additional funding is used effectively to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up
 - middle leaders hold teachers to account for the progress and behaviour of pupils
 - work is set that meets the different needs of pupils and is sufficiently challenging to hold their interest
 - assessment is used to inform more ambitious target-setting
 - teachers have higher expectations of pupils.
- Improve pupils' welfare by taking action to:
 - reduce the absence of pupils and the number of exclusions, particularly for disadvantaged pupils
 - ensure that students in the sixth form are provided with a suitable programme to develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural education
 - create a more inclusive culture, so that pupils of all ages feel safe and comfortable in the school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this

aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The academy has been subject to a number of significant changes since the last inspection. These include a move to a new school site, high turnover of staff, including senior leaders, and substantial curriculum redesign. The management and timing of these changes have undermined the stability of leadership and distracted leaders from the core purpose of raising pupils' achievement. These changes have intensified the financial difficulties facing the academy, and are hindering current leaders' attempts to provide pupils with a good education.
- The academy's joint sponsors, the Aldridge Foundation and Dorset County Council, have failed to provide adequate support to the academy. Although achievement has been significantly below average across the academy for some time, the sponsors have not intervened in a timely, substantial and meaningful way to halt this decline.
- It is strongly recommended that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- Over time, senior leaders have not sufficiently challenged staff underperformance to improve the quality of teaching. Consequently, achievement has been too low for too long.
- The principal has inherited a number of difficult issues that are not of her making. She does not currently have the capacity or full support from external partners to tackle these issues effectively.
- Middle leaders are not holding teachers to account for the behaviour of pupils and the progress they make. Until very recently, there were insufficient checks on the quality of teaching. Some middle leadership roles remain vacant and further staff changes are also anticipated by the end of the year.
- The curriculum has recently undergone much change on more than one occasion. As a result, staff, parents and pupils are confused about its purpose and aims. These changes have weakened the delivery of the curriculum. As a result, pupils have not, until recently, been following a curriculum of sufficient depth that will prepare them well for their next steps in education or life after school. This has limited pupils' achievement and negatively affected their performance in national tests and examinations.
- The principal, supported by the interim executive principal from another multi-academy trust, is now rightly establishing a curriculum which is promoting deeper learning in core subjects. This is enabling pupils to advance their learning at a more rapid pace. Nevertheless, this work is very recent and it is too soon to fully judge impact.
- The external support provided by the interim executive principal is helping to establish the much-needed improvements. For example, a new behaviour policy has been introduced which has helped staff improve the conduct of pupils around the school. Programmes have been introduced to improve middle leadership capacity, to strengthen the management of teachers' performance and to monitor more closely the progress being made by Year 11 pupils. However, this work is very recent and has not

had time to embed.

- Leaders do not know whether additional funding, allocated to support disadvantaged pupils and of which there is a sizeable amount, is being well spent. They have not monitored or evaluated the effectiveness of strategies intended to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up.
- Similarly, leaders have not evaluated whether sports premium funding for primary-aged pupils is being spent effectively. There is currently no plan for how this funding will be spent this academic year.
- Leaders have failed to cultivate a strong, constructive relationship with parents, despite this being an area for improvement raised at the previous inspection. Communication from the school has been poor and failed to keep parents informed of the many changes that have taken place. Parents do not feel consulted or that their views are valued. Consequently, they feel that they have little involvement in their children's education.
- The principal and interim executive principal are honest and accurate in their evaluation of the school's effectiveness. This has enabled them to readily identify the issues causing concern and tackle some of them with purpose.
- There are inconsistencies between the provision for primary-aged pupils across the two campuses (Maritime House and Osprey Quay). This means that leaders are not ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils.
- Historically, leaders have not closely monitored pupils attending alternative provision. Expectations of these pupils have been too low and leaders have not been clear about what they expect them to achieve. Since the appointment of the principal, staff have been more proactive in monitoring the progress of this group. Staff are now ensuring that the alternative provision is equipping pupils with the skills and knowledge that will prepare them for life after school.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not held senior leaders to account for the achievement of pupils over time. As a result, poor achievement has repeatedly gone unchallenged. Governors do not have a clear idea of the progress being made by different groups of pupils. This is because they have not been provided with suitable information by leaders and have not asked the right challenging questions.
- Governors do not know how additional funding is being used to support disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up. They do not know what progress is being made by these pupils.
- Governors are not clear about their roles and responsibilities. This is because the wider leadership of the academy, which includes the joint sponsor, a patron and the recently established interim academy board, has become more complex. For example, the governors are not clear about how they fit into this structure and the powers they have at their disposal.
- Current governors are committed to their role. They have an honest and accurate understanding of their effectiveness, which is helping them to develop. They are keen

to establish better relationships with parents and the local community. They are supportive of the new principal and have started to provide more challenge to hold her to account more effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children are fit for purpose. Senior leaders ensure that staff receive the necessary training, such as the 'Prevent' duty, which trains staff to identify and tackle extremism. Should any staff be absent for training, records are kept that enable leaders to ensure that 'mop-up' training takes place for these staff.
- All referrals about pupils are electronically stored, which enables leaders to closely monitor them. This ensures that the right support is provided to vulnerable pupils and the appropriate external agencies are involved when necessary.
- Improvements have been made to the school site to ensure that pupils are kept safe. These include clearer car-park marking, appropriate fencing, and electronic gate and door access.
- The role of safeguarding lead is not currently being fulfilled by one designated member of staff. However, other senior staff, who have been appropriately trained, are ably carrying out this role in the meantime.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Consequently, pupils are not challenged to aim high and do not achieve their potential.
- The current system to assess pupils in school does not provide staff with a clear understanding of the progress made by pupils. As a result, some teachers do not know in sufficient detail where pupils have gaps in their knowledge and are unable to address these weaknesses. Staff, pupils and parents find the assessment system confusing and difficult to interpret.
- Pupils are not set accurate and meaningful targets to improve because assessment information is weak. More often than not, targets are not ambitious enough.
- Many teachers are not setting work that meets the different needs of pupils. This is because often teachers' planning is not based on a secure understanding of pupils' starting points because their use of assessment information is weak. As a result, the most able pupils are bored because they receive insufficient challenge, while the least able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not provided with suitable resources that enable them to access the learning.
- There is frequent low-level disruption in lessons as a consequence of work not being set that meets pupils' needs. Often pupils chatter and drift off-task because they are not sufficiently interested in the work put before them.
- Pupils have not been making adequate progress because they do not meaningfully

engage with the advice provided by teachers to help them improve their work. Pupils are not encouraged to reflect on their mistakes and to edit their work in order to improve it.

- Too much teaching is inadequate because pupils are not being taught by specialists with the appropriate expertise.
- Newly qualified teachers are well supported by leaders. As a result, they are making a strong, valuable contribution to teaching. Leaders are rightly looking to grow this existing expertise for the benefit of pupils.
- Learning environments are not used to best effect to celebrate or promote learning. They fail to stimulate pupils to learn and are often uninspiring.
- External support provided by the Wimborne Teaching Alliance is aiding the development of teaching in mathematics and science.
- A new approach in key stage 1 to the teaching of phonics is enabling pupils to make greater progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Although safeguarding is effective, younger pupils who spoke with inspectors reported that they sometimes felt uncomfortable in the presence of the older pupils. For example, one pupil said, 'the older pupils shouldn't be allowed to use bad language'. Another pupil commented, 'I heard an older pupil say a hurtful word to someone.'
- Pupils report that bullying is not tackled quickly or effectively enough. Although pupils feel that staff take their concerns seriously, this does not necessarily result in action that quickly and resolutely resolves any issues.
- Pupils are not well prepared for life outside school and for when they eventually leave school. They have mixed views about the effectiveness of the guidance they receive about how to stay safe online and manage social media. Students in the sixth form do not have a good-enough understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils across the school have little understanding of other cultures in modern Britain.
- Pupils are confident, self-assured and happy to share their opinions. They speak in an engaging, forthright and honest way about their school.
- Pupils in key stage 1 who are at risk of exclusion benefit from a behaviour support programme designed to promote their social and emotional development so that the possibility of exclusion is avoided.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- There is too much low-level disruption in lessons because pupils are not sufficiently

engaged in their learning. The management of the Maritime House learning environment does not effectively help pupils to remain focused on their learning. This is because noise travels too easily between areas where lessons are taking place, which distracts pupils from concentrating on their work fully.

- The newly introduced behaviour policy has improved conduct around the school, but is not having greater impact in lessons because it is being inconsistently applied by staff. Younger pupils report that they feel safer because of the introduction of the new policy.
- The application of the new behaviour policy has meant exclusions have risen substantially. This is because leaders are now decisively tackling the poor behaviour that in the past has not been effectively dealt with.
- Absence overall and for particular groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils, is too high. Leaders are taking action to reduce pupils' absence through working more closely with parents and the school's education welfare officer.
- The majority of pupils wear their uniform correctly. However, a number of pupils try to 'customise' their uniform, for example, by wearing trainers.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- The attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 2 is significantly below average across all their subjects and has been so for the last three years. The progress of pupils has also been correspondingly low across key stages 1 and 2.
- The achievement of pupils in key stage 4 has also been weak over time in a range of subjects, particularly mathematics and science.
- Most groups of pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make insufficient progress. Over time their attainment and progress have been too low in comparison with their peers.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not fit for purpose. This is because there is currently no special educational needs coordinator overseeing the provision. Consequently, pupils' needs are not being identified and fully provided for.
- Secondary pupils currently in the school are making good progress in performing arts subjects, such as dance, and languages. This is because pupils are receiving better-quality teaching.
- Historically, the attainment of pupils in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been significantly lower than average, year on year. However, there are now signs of improvement and pupils are making more rapid progress. This is because a new programme to teach phonics has been adopted by staff and is proving to be successful.
- Leaders are developing a more positive reading culture in school. Pupils are being encouraged to read more often and to read widely. At present, however, the impact is not easy to discern because staff are not closely tracking assessment information.
- Pupils are not being well prepared for their next steps in education or for the world of work. They do not receive adequate advice or guidance about other institutions or

career options. Consequently, pupils report that they feel ill-prepared for the future and are unsure of what they are equipped to do once they leave school.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The quality of early years provision is variable across the two academy campuses. This is because leaders have too little strategic oversight and are failing to ensure that all children have equal access to consistent good-quality provision. The geographical distance between the two sites makes it difficult for leaders to effectively monitor provision and practice.
- Leaders are over-generous in their self-evaluation. Although they have rightly identified that there are pockets of strong teaching practice, they have not taken sufficient action to address inequality of provision.
- Leaders do not have adequate plans in place to improve provision. This is because they are unclear about what specific changes need to occur. Local authority advisers have similarly failed to identify weaknesses in provision and this has contributed to leaders having an over-generous view of the effectiveness of early years provision.
- Some staff do not have sufficiently high expectations of what children know and can do. Children are not being challenged sufficiently or provided with different experiences and activities that would challenge and extend their learning. This limits children's opportunities to experiment and consolidate their learning and so make more rapid progress.
- There are insufficient opportunities for teaching assistants to improve their practice and take responsibility for their professional development. This has an impact on the quality of teaching because they are often inappropriately deployed to take on a whole-class teaching role. Nursery-age children are particularly affected by this because they do not receive teaching from well-trained practitioners.
- Some staff do not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of children's learning needs because they have not fully got to grips with the higher expectations of the recently introduced assessment system. As a result, children sometimes complete work or participate in activities that are not best suited to their needs.
- Fewer children than average have been achieving a good level of development for the last few years. However, published information indicates that this measure is improving.
- Children in the early years behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. This is because they enjoy participating in the activities set by staff.
- Parental engagement is increasing because staff are creating more opportunities to meet with parents to discuss their child's learning. Parents feel more positive about their relationship with early years staff as a result.
- Transition arrangements are in place for children moving from Nursery to Reception and Reception to Year 1. However, these arrangements would benefit from greater rigour to ensure that children get off to a flying start in their Reception Year.

16 to 19 study programmes

Inadequate

- Leaders are not using assessment information to best effect to ensure that students are sufficiently challenged to make the progress they are capable of. Assessment data is collected and analysed, but it is not compared with other information such as students' work and their attitudes to learning.
- Outcomes for students are not good enough. Over time too few students following A-level and AS-level courses have achieved their target grades. Too few students have achieved higher grades in comparison with national averages and too many students have failed to achieve a grade.
- Last year, there was no significant difference between the achievement of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students. However, current information indicates that there is now a widening difference in the achievement of these two groups, because disadvantaged students are not progressing as well as their peers.
- Provision for students re-sitting mathematics and English GCSEs is not meeting requirements. There are no timetabled lessons for mathematics; pupils use two tutorial sessions of 20 minutes each to prepare for the examination. Consequently, outcomes for mathematics are too low.
- Students' academic and wider pastoral development is not well supported. There is no structured programme to provide personal, social and health education. As a result, students do not have a meaningful appreciation of fundamental British values, such as the rule of law and democracy. Tutorial time is insufficient to allow staff to provide helpful mentoring to students. Therefore, staff are not in a position to closely monitor students' ongoing progress to ensure they make the best use of their time.
- Teachers use strong subject knowledge to engage students and devise activities that challenge their thinking. Students report that they enjoy their learning as a result. This is also because positive relationships exist between staff and students.
- Students follow suitable courses that meet their needs and interests. They receive useful and appropriate guidance from staff prior to joining the sixth form.
- Students are positive about the support they have received to prepare them for when they leave the academy. For example, students value the input from teachers in helping to prepare university application forms. Some students develop employability skills through personalised projects and receive input from local businesses. However, students do not benefit from work experience.

School details

Unique reference number	138388
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10023022

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	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Tim Gomm
Principal	Mrs Jocelyn Hayes
Telephone number	01305 820262
Website	www.ipaca.uk.com
Email address	royalmanoroffice@ipaca.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about pupil premium, sports premium and catch-up funding.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Isle of Portland Aldridge Community Academy is a larger than average-sized school for pupils in all phases of education.
- The current principal took up post in November 2015.
- The principal is being supported by the interim executive principal of another multi-academy trust. This support was brokered by the regional schools commissioner.
- The academy is co-sponsored by the Aldridge Foundation and Dorset County Council.

- The Aldridge Foundation has indicated that it will cease sponsoring the academy in the near future. The regional schools commissioner is currently looking to broker appropriate multi-academy trust support.
- The academy has a patron, although it is unclear what formal agreement underpins the association between academy and patron.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who receive support is much higher than average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is slightly below the national average.
- Five pupils attend alternative provision at The Compass, which is part of the Dorset Learning Centre.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 and Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in a range of subjects and across year groups. Many observations were jointly conducted with leaders.
- Meetings were held with the principal and other senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers, groups of pupils, the interim executive principal providing external support to the school and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information on pupils' outcomes, the school's self-evaluation, records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, behaviour, attendance, exclusion and the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and observed their conduct at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Inspection team

Steve Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Hester Millsop	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Wright	Ofsted Inspector
Ross Newman	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Katherine Powell	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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