

The Littlehampton Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135745
Local Authority	N/A
Inspection number	381918
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Christopher Russell HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Maintained
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	1653
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Toole-Mackson
Headteacher	Steve Jewell
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
School address	Hill Road Littlehampton BN17 6DQ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Forty four lessons were observed, taught by 44 teachers. Meetings were held with students, staff and governors, and an external consultant who is working with the academy. Inspectors observed the academy's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation as well as 136 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and questionnaires completed by staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Are all groups of students making at least satisfactory progress (particularly in mathematics)?
- Is there now more good teaching and have the weaknesses in teaching identified at the time of the monitoring inspection been remedied?
- How well do leaders monitor and evaluate the academy's work?
- How much impact are middle leaders having on the academy's improvement?

Information about the school

The Littlehampton Academy opened in September 2009 in the same accommodation as its predecessor school. The academy is due to move into new buildings in September 2012. The academy is sponsored by The Woodard Academies Trust and the local authority.

The academy is larger than the average secondary school. Its specialisms are in business and enterprise, and in English. Education for students in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is provided in collaboration with a number of other schools and colleges. The academy houses a small unit for students with autistic spectrum disorders. The proportions of students from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language are small. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The Littlehampton Academy is providing a satisfactory standard of education; there have been some significant improvements in the past two years. Most importantly, teaching is improving: while it is satisfactory overall, more is now good. As a result, students are increasingly achieving more. The way in which staff care for students and keep them safe are strengths of the academy's work. As a result, behaviour and attendance have improved and students feel well supported and safe. There have also been some particular improvements in sixth form provision. The academy's work as a specialist college is making a positive contribution to improvement. Provision in English is a significant strength and students are given valuable opportunities to develop enterprise skills.

Some useful, recent work has been done to give students more opportunities to contribute to the life of the academy and local community. However, some students told inspectors that they did not feel that their views were listened to and many were unaware of the work of the student council.

The academy is increasingly well placed to sustain and continue its improvement. Key to this is senior leaders' very accurate and precise understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. While they recognise the improvements that have been made, they also understand that there is still much to do. They rightly recognise that the key priority is to improve the consistency of teaching. Members of the governing body also have a clear understanding of the academy's effectiveness and are playing a useful role in its improvement. The academy's capacity for further improvement is, however, currently satisfactory rather than good. This is because much of the monitoring and development work has been heavily led by senior staff. Useful work is going on to strengthen the role that middle leaders are able to play in this process, but their impact on the academy's improvements is currently variable.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of lessons where teaching is good, in particular by:
 - ensuring that teachers make more extensive use of information about students' targets and current achievement when they plan their lessons,

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- so that students of different abilities are challenged appropriately
- ensuring that teachers check students’ learning more carefully as the lesson proceeds
- strengthening the role that middle leaders are able to play in the monitoring of their areas and in the development of teaching and learning.
- Strengthen the opportunities for students to engage in decision making, take on responsibilities and make a positive contribution to the life of the academy.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students make satisfactory progress as they move through the academy and reach broadly (although slightly below) average levels by the end of Year 11. Examination results are rising; there were particular improvements last year in students’ average GCSE point score and in the proportion of students attaining five or more higher grades. Many Year 10 students have already achieved a vocational qualification. Students with more significant special educational needs and/or disabilities who took GCSE examinations in 2010 made slightly less progress than other students. Early analysis of the 2011 results indicates that this group of students made better progress. Students in the specialist unit are well supported, ensuring that they are able to make at least as much progress as others. Students achieve very highly in English. Achievement in mathematics is much weaker, although it is now beginning to rise.

Students generally enjoy school and respond positively where there is good teaching. They feel safe in the academy and their behaviour has improved. It was good around the site and in the majority of lessons observed during the inspection, although students say that some lessons are still disrupted by misbehaviour. Older students in particular are also sometimes rather passive in lessons.

Attendance has improved significantly in recent years and is now broadly average, although the proportion of students who are persistently absent is still rather high. The current site is very large and spread out; the move to fewer, longer lessons has eased congestion, improved punctuality and reduced time lost to movement. The business and enterprise specialism plays a useful role in helping to prepare students for the future. Students are increasingly able to speak confidently and discuss together in groups. Nevertheless, many students’ future opportunities are limited by their relatively weak literacy and numeracy skills.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	3

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is improving: while there is still a small amount of inadequate teaching, this is now rare, and an increasing proportion of teaching is good. Where teaching is good, it is because expectations are high, the lesson moves at a rapid pace and the lesson's activities are shaped to challenge everyone. In these lessons teachers are very clear about the intended outcomes of the lesson, and the activities in the lesson are carefully selected to match them. Teachers in these lessons regularly check whether students are learning and making progress. There are also good opportunities for students to discuss things with each other.

Less-effective lessons typically have one or more of the following features.

- The teacher does not make enough use of information about students' targets and current achievement when they plan the lesson. This means that the lesson does not provide the right level of challenge: more-able students find the work too easy and less-able students struggle to make progress.
- The lesson's objectives focus on what the students will do rather than what they will learn.
- The teacher over-dominates the lesson, giving students too few opportunities to work independently or with each other.
- The lesson moves at a slow pace, particularly in the second half of the 100 minute lesson.
- The teacher's explanations are unclear and students are given too little guidance to help them carry out tasks.
- The teacher does not check students' learning as the lesson proceeds.

Students know their targets and understand how well they are doing. Marking is improving and some is very good, although it is still variable in its usefulness to

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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students.

The curriculum is kept under review to ensure that it supports improvements in students’ outcomes. A range of vocational and academic courses are now offered at Key Stage 4. Year 9 students can opt to follow a number of vocational courses. Although at a relatively early stage, work to develop literacy across the curriculum is beginning to have a positive impact on students’ reading abilities. A range of extra-curricular activities are on offer, but students say that they are not well attended; the academy does not track students’ participation. Provision in mathematics has been a weakness; it is now improving.

Care, guidance and support are good. Intensive support has helped many students with specific and substantial difficulties to make progress in their personal development and achieve in their academic work. Good arrangements for transition, including a specific settling-in programme, help students to adjust to secondary school. Close monitoring of students’ absence has supported a significant rise in attendance.

Students in the specialist unit are well cared for. Contact and integration between the unit and the wider academy are purposeful and productive, and teachers receive very good information about individual students and their needs. The academy’s support for other students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. A new coordinator took over at the start of this term; appropriate plans are in place to strengthen the academy’s work in this area.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The Principal and his senior leadership team have high expectations for the academy’s improvement. Structured and systematic monitoring is in place to collect a wide range of information about aspects of the academy’s performance. Self-evaluation at senior leader level is very accurate, although it is not yet fully secure at all levels. Middle leaders are increasingly involved in monitoring and evaluation, but this development is relatively recent and not yet fully embedded. As a result, middle leaders’ understanding of, and impact on, the weaknesses in their areas is variable. Governors are ambitious, both for the academy and for their role in its improvement. Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the academy’s strengths and weaknesses, and they hold senior leaders to account for their work.

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Systems for safeguarding are good. Staff are provided with useful training. Safeguarding policies and practice are monitored carefully by governors. Senior leaders are committed to ensuring that everyone is able to achieve well. New systems have recently been introduced to collect and analyse data about students' achievement. Although still quite new, this is a useful development and is helping leaders to focus more closely on the achievement of different groups.

A range of effective partnerships are in place. These help the academy to widen the range of courses available, particularly in the sixth form. The impact of this partnership provision is carefully monitored to ensure that it contributes to students' outcomes and provides value for money. The academy's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory and improving. Links with the local community are strengthening, for example, through the work of the academy's chaplain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Sixth form developments are being led well. The work of the sixth form is monitored closely and any weaknesses tackled assiduously. Leaders are ambitious for further improvement. Sixth form provision is now good, although there has not yet been sufficient time for this good provision to make a full impact on students' outcomes, which are satisfactory but improving quickly.

Sixth form students are well taught. Programmes are well matched to students' different needs and collaboration with other sixth form providers has increased the range of courses on offer. The rigorous tracking of students' achievement identifies any weaknesses or underachievement at an early stage. Students receive a range of

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individual support and tuition to support their progress. Leaders recognise that they need to focus on improving students’ independent learning skills.

Year 13 students who took examinations last year made satisfactory progress during their time in the sixth form. Year 12 students made much better progress in their first year in the sixth form. There is, however, variability between levels of achievement in different subjects. Student retention is good. Students’ contribution to the academy and wider community is relatively limited, although staff are working hard to increase the range of opportunities in this area.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

A relatively small proportion of parents and carers completed the inspection questionnaire. There were many positive responses, although quite a lot of parents and carers had some concerns about aspects of the academy’s work. Most of these related to the quality of teaching, behaviour and the academy’s communication with them. Inspectors judged these aspects to be satisfactory. The quality of teaching is still variable, although it is improving. Behaviour is also improving, although students say that some lessons are disrupted by misbehaviour. Senior leaders recognise the need to strengthen their partnership work with parents and carers and are making a range of changes in this area.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Littlehampton Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 136 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1653 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	31	79	59	13	10	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	35	26	91	67	7	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	42	31	77	57	9	7	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	36	67	50	18	13	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	35	26	79	59	14	10	2	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	32	24	67	50	26	19	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	20	67	50	27	20	4	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	38	28	75	56	8	6	3	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	40	30	74	55	11	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	24	66	49	18	13	10	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	21	74	55	12	9	8	6
The school is led and managed effectively	35	26	66	49	17	13	8	6
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	42	31	79	59	4	3	5	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 September 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The Littlehampton Academy, Littlehampton, BN17 6DQ

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection. I am writing to you to tell you about our main findings.

We judged the academy to be satisfactory overall. A number of things have improved over the past two years. Teaching is getting better and this is helping you to get better examination results. Your attendance is also rising. You are well cared for and this helps to ensure that you feel safe in the academy. Behaviour is also improving. We saw good behaviour around the academy and in most of the lessons that we visited, but you told us that lessons are sometimes disrupted by misbehaviour. Some of you were unaware of the work of the student council and some of you also told us that you do not feel that your views are always listened to. We have asked the academy's leaders to work on this area.

The most important thing now is for the academy to continue to improve the quality of teaching. In particular, we have asked the academy's senior leaders to ensure that all teachers:

- ensure that their lessons challenge everyone
- carefully check how much you are learning during the lesson.

The academy is now in a better position to maintain and continue its improvement. The Principal and other senior leaders have an accurate and thorough understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. They know what they need to do next to support further improvement. They recognise the need to work closely with the academy's middle leaders to ensure that they are all able to make a full contribution to this improvement.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Russell
Her Majesty's Inspector

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