

Worthing High School

South Farm Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN14 7AR

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures

- Students' attainment in English and science is too low.
- As a result of weak teaching, students are making inadequate progress in some subjects. Some teachers talk too much, take too little account of students' previous learning and do not match work to the learning needs of students, thus limiting their progress.
- Students' reading and writing skills are not being sufficiently developed and promoted across the school.
- Students lose interest and become passive in lessons that fail to interest and challenge them.
- Although leaders have recently worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning, it is too early to see the impact of these changes on improving students' achievement.
- The school's ability to demonstrate that it is making secure improvements is limited as many leaders have only been in post for a very short time.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed acting headteacher has the confidence of the staff and has raised morale quickly. Staff are more engaged and keen to improve their teaching.
- Students' progress in languages and humanities is good or better and attainment higher as a result of strong teaching and the good quality of assessment.
- Teaching is improving as a result of leaders' efforts to help staff to teach better.
- Students are polite and courteous to visitors. They get on well with each other and with teachers. They report that they feel safe.
- Leaders, together with the governing body, have a clearer view of what the school needs to do to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors spent over 18 hours observing 40 lessons taught by 36 teachers, of which six were joint observations with senior leaders.
- In addition, the inspection team looked at samples of students' work and made a number of shorter visits to lessons. They also spoke to students about their literacy skills.
- Meetings were held with two groups of students, representatives from the governing body and school staff, including senior and other leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors took account of 94 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 49 responses to the staff questionnaire. Additional written responses were received from parents.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, safeguarding documentation, minutes of governors' meetings and anonymised records of the performance management of staff.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Margaret Faull	Additional Inspector
Juliet Jaggs	Additional Inspector
Heather Leatt	Additional Inspector
Veronica Young	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with 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.

Information about this school

- Worthing High School is an average-sized secondary school.
- Approximately 90% of the students are of White British heritage, with small numbers from minority ethnic groups. The largest of these groups are from African and Bangladeshi backgrounds. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is in line with the national average.
- There are more boys than girls. Students join the school at the start of Year 8.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is below the national average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is above the national average. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is in line with national averages.
- Ten students are supported on alternative programmes at a local college.
- The school has specialist status in Business and Enterprise. It became an academy at the start of December 2012. The predecessor school was last inspected in June 2011 and found to be satisfactory.
- An acting headteacher was appointed to the predecessor school at the end of September 2012 and continues to lead the new school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in all subjects in Years 8 to 11 by:
 - planning lessons that take account of what students have learned before and which are matched to their different levels of ability
 - ensuring that teachers talk less in lessons so students have more time to be actively involved in learning
 - providing a variety of activities that offer greater challenge for students, especially higher attaining students
 - improving the quality of teachers' marking so that students know what they need to do to improve and can meet their ambitious targets.
- Improve rates of progress in English and science in Years 8 to 11 by:
 - making sure teaching challenges students in these subjects, especially the highest attaining students
 - ensuring students' skills in reading and writing are developed and promoted across the school.
- Improve overall standards of behaviour by:
 - making sure activities in lessons capture all students' interest so that behaviour in lessons improves

- ensuring that the school’s procedures for managing behaviour are consistently applied by all staff.
 - Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management in driving forward improvement by:
 - developing the skills of leaders at all levels so they can make rigorous and accurate checks on the quality of teaching and take prompt and effective action to tackle any weaknesses
 - making sure that evaluative judgements about the quality of teaching are linked to students’ progress
 - ensuring that governors hold the school to account for its priorities and performance.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because students' knowledge and understanding in English and science are not good enough. In these subjects, progress in lessons and students' work does not indicate that they are closing the gaps rapidly.
- Too often, students do not learn well enough or make enough progress in lessons. The more able students frequently do not do as well as they should because they are expected to do the same work as everybody else, which is often too easy for them.
- Students' skills in reading and writing are not well developed and this impedes their progress in other subjects.
- In mathematics and some other subjects including humanities and languages, progress across the school is good.
- There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs often do better than their peers as a result of the support provided by teachers and teaching assistants who are knowledgeable about students' particular needs. Similarly, other lower-attaining students make better progress than others because their individual needs are well known and they are supported effectively in the classroom as a result.
- Students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make inadequate progress in line with that of their classmates.
- The gap between the attainment of students eligible for support through the pupil premium and other students is narrowing, although they are not yet making up the ground with all students nationally.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because students are not making enough progress, particularly in English and science. Although teaching is improving, students still cannot read and write as well as they should because not enough emphasis is given to developing these skills and opportunities to promote students' literacy skills in lessons are often missed.
- Inspectors saw too much less effective and inadequate teaching, which explains why students are making poor progress in some subjects. Inspectors found the school's view of teaching was too generous, although joint observations confirmed that the school's leaders know what constitutes good and outstanding teaching.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers expect everyone in the class to do the same work regardless of their ability. Students who finish quickly are often left waiting for the rest of the class to catch up, while other students struggle to make any progress. Teachers' planning does not always take enough account of what students already know, understand and can do.
- In too many lessons, teachers rely too heavily on the use of worksheets which are completed and stuck into books by students. The predominance of worksheets rarely encourages students to write extensively, thus limiting opportunities for them to develop their skills in writing at length.
- Sometimes, teachers talk for too long and students are too passive. Often, work is not hard enough for students, especially the more able. In these instances, students make little or no progress.
- Additional support for Year 8 students who cannot read as well as they should for their age has been effective and involves trained Year 10 students acting as reading buddies to encourage others in their reading. However, older students, especially boys, told inspectors that they did not enjoy reading and found it boring.

- Teaching is improving as a result of recent action taken by school leaders. There are examples of good and outstanding teaching, especially in mathematics, languages and humanities, where teachers carefully plan engaging activities that are matched to students' abilities. In these lessons, teachers' high expectations of students' capabilities are evident.
- Marking is of variable quality across subjects and within subjects. Some exemplary marking provides regular feedback offering comments on how to improve. However, too much marking is brief and offers little or no advice to students about how to progress to the next level in their learning. Incorrect punctuation and spelling, including subject-specific spelling, is rarely addressed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- While the large majority of parents who completed Parent View were positive about students' behaviour, the views of a small minority reflected the inspection findings that behaviour requires improvement.
- Students are polite and generally treat each other and adults with courtesy and respect. Misbehaviour in lessons is rare, but some students lose interest and become passive in lessons that fail to stimulate and challenge them. Even in those lessons where the teaching is weak, the majority of students demonstrate responsible attitudes.
- New procedures for dealing with inappropriate behaviour are clear, although they are not used consistently across the school. Students who exhibit challenging behaviour are supported well by the school. The number of fixed-term exclusions is declining because of the school's determination to identify students causing concern and to act more quickly to address any problems.
- Attendance is improving. The school has successfully worked with partner primary schools and parents to ensure a more consistent approach to attendance. Term-time holidays are refused and ongoing support is proving effective so that attendance is now broadly average.
- Recorded incidents of bullying are falling, as a result of the support provided by pastoral leaders. The school tackles all forms of discrimination thoroughly and promotes equality of opportunity but students do not achieve equally well in all subjects.
- Students say they feel safe and they are confident that the school deals with any incidents of bullying effectively. They are knowledgeable about how to deal with bullying on social media sites. Most parents agree that their children are happy and safe at the school.

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate mainly because there has been insufficient time for leaders to tackle the issues of poor achievement and weaker teaching in some subjects.
- The acting headteacher and senior leaders are now making checks on the quality of teaching and providing supportive guidance to staff about how to improve. Evidence from the school's records, lesson observations and work samples shows that teaching has started to improve. However, these actions have not had sufficient time to have an impact on raising students' achievement.
- The acting headteacher has quickly identified what the school does well and where it needs to improve. She has the confidence of staff and morale is rising. Expectations are high and staff have a new sense of purpose, as confirmed by the staff questionnaires. However, after such a short time in post, it is too early to see the impact of her leadership on outcomes for students.
- Recently appointed subject leaders in English, mathematics and science are similarly focused on improving teaching and driving up standards through more rigorous use of information on students' progress to identify where any further action is needed. There are some clear signs of their positive impact but, again, it is too early to measure this in terms of better teaching and

improved achievement.

- Targets set as part of teachers' performance management are being used by the school to better hold staff to account in the drive to raise standards. The governing body is informed of performance management outcomes but is not sufficiently involved in setting targets or in decisions about teachers' salaries. The school has an accurate view of its own performance but plans for the future are relatively new and currently lack sufficient detail.
 - The school's arrangements for ensuring the welfare and safety of students meet the current government requirements and all staff are given regular training in child protection issues.
 - The school has developed partnerships with external agencies to offer alternative provision for students who are at risk of underachievement. As a result, these students are now beginning to catch up with their peers.
 - The school is using the pupil premium to offer mentoring and to support after-school and enrichment activities. Students supported by the pupil premium are now mostly meeting their targets and the gap between these students and their peers is narrowing.
 - Students are provided with a curriculum that generally ensures their needs and aspirations are met, but it is not sufficient to develop their literacy skills or provide sufficient challenge for the most able. Opportunities for students to improve their numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics are infrequent.
 - The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and well supported by tutor time, assemblies and lessons. For example, in a Year 9 geography lesson, students reflected on slums in countries in the developing world and contributed to a meaningful discussion about poverty.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and has supported the improvements that have been made so far. Training has helped its members to understand data better and how the school's performance compares with that of schools nationally. Governors are only just beginning to make use of this information to challenge the school. Governors are aware of the school's finances and the way that pupil premium funding is spent. They are not yet holding leaders robustly to account for the impact of this spending. Governors understand how performance management links to the salaries and promotion of teachers and leaders, although there has not been time for them to see the impact of targets on the school's overall performance.
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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	139109
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	406342

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	12–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	980
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Cohen
Headteacher	Carolyn Dickinson
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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